

### 1967 recalled

## How far have we come?

It's July 1981. People need jobs, houses, proper nutrition and the feeling there's some kind of hope at the end of their personal rainbow.

Remember July 1967? People needed jobs, houses, proper nutrition and just a little hope they could make it in a tough world.

Back then, the hopes and dreams of many exploded into a bloody city riot in which 42 persons died, uncounted numbers were wounded and more than 4,000 were arrested.

Ten days from now, the 14th anniversary of the Detroit riots will occur. It's not a time for celebration, but perhaps a time for introspection.

It was a long, hot summer, even before Sunday, July 23, 1967, when it all started. The flames of Watts in Los Angeles and Newark in New Jersey were cooling embers. All summer long people had said, "It can't happen here."

Wasn't Detroit the city with the largest black home ownership in the country?

The automobile plants housed ever-moving assembly lines that kept people working. This was a union town. Workers had protection, equality.

**YET, STARTING** with a routine police raid on an after-hours drinking spot on 12th Street in a neighborhood accustomed to raids, came the conflagration that enveloped the nation's fifth largest city in the worst of all the riots.

Police, Michigan National Guard and U.S. Army



**Shirlee Iden**

personnel, all were involved, as were firefighters and neighboring police departments.

By the time the riots were quieted, the bells had rung for 1,682 fire runs.

At the height of the tension, when blackout conditions prevailed as though in war, a Detroit News reporter recalls that someone lit a cigarette and a 4-year-old child was killed in the volley of shots that followed.

It was a time of shock and tragedy, a trauma not yet completely healed though we've weathered 13 summers since.

One recent day — when baseball was still played in Tiger Stadium — I left the ballpark with my husband, Jack, and daughter, Tzviah. We turned out on Rosa Parks Boulevard, a street known to Jack and me since childhood days as 12th Street.

"Is this the same 12th Street where your house was when you two met?" Tzviah asked. Jack said it was, but a few miles down the pike.

"LET'S GO this way and see what it looks like at

The 1967 Detroit riot resulted in massive destruction by arson. Property damage in the millions occurred mostly to businesses in the inner city. A total of 42 persons died.



Hazelwood and 12th," I said.

Traveling down Rosa Parks Boulevard, we passed through neighborhoods that had flourished long before any of us were born. We saw decay and many empty spaces where renovation was contemplated but not quite accomplished.

We passed the place where Jack worked for five years as a soda jerk from age 13. But Bortman's Drugs is just a memory.

At 12th and Hazelwood, where Jack's family once lived in the upper flat of a red brick, two-story home, we found two surprises.

First, was the new development along Rosa Parks — several blocks of brick duplexes where once small businesses like the vaulted Besky's Delicatessen flourished. They are neat, homey and new looking.

Then, not new at all, but like a gift from the past, we found the family home. It still stands with ample

front porches and concrete porches on both sides of the steps. Decades ago, Jack and I had sat there learning about one another.

Mere blocks from Hazelwood is the Clairmount and 12th corner where the riots began. And there too, we saw a beneficial facelift.

Yet renovation in that area of the city pops out at you like an infrequent oasis. The duplexes on Rosa Park Boulevard sit conspicuously like a layer of frosting on a crumbling cake. You wonder how many of the refugees of the riot live in better housing today than before the conflagration began.

Today, people leave Detroit for the same reasons their parents and grandparents came — seeking jobs and a better life.

The city's motto, "Resurget Cineribus," means, "It shall rise again from the ashes." Fourteen years have brought a great deal of change. Some can be labeled progress. Have we risen far enough?

### Boomer likes comfort

## Dogs enjoy vacations, too!

As this is written, our vacation plans are almost complete — fishin' rod, trout flies, maps of Rocky Mountains campgrounds, all are ready.

At my side in the den is my faithful companion The Boomer. I wonder what memorable stunts he will pull this trip.

Boom-Boom is the given name of this 21-pound poodle, but everyone automatically calls him The Boomer. He is the son of Beau the Head Pooodle, about whom you've seen several columns. Beau passed on last fall, in his 17th year.

Beau was cocky, loud-mouthed, demanding as a drill sergeant, aggressively affectionate. The Boomer is shy, sedate and works by indirection — except on vacations.

ONE SUMMER we had a cottage on Lake Michigan near St. Ignace, and the humans went to Mackinac Island for the afternoon, leaving two steaks to thaw in the sink.

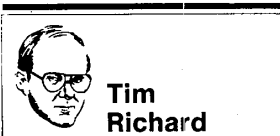
Beau caught up on his napping, but The Boomer found his way up a chair, across the breakfast counter, past a television set, across a refrigerator, over the stove and into the sink. He chomped up one steak pretty good.

"That's your steak," said my wife Nancy.

Out ice fishing, I put my fish in a bucket — knowing The Boomer — but other guys left theirs on the ice. The Boomer spotted a flopping little perch near one chap's hole and proceeded to steal it, consuming it head, bones, fins and all.

Fortunately, the other angler had a sense of humor and plenty of fish to spare, so he laughed.

FOR ONE CAMPING trip, Nancy got a new red sleeping bag and swore she would be the first



**Tim Richard**

and only creature to get into it. She was aware that The Boomer practices the ABCs of Boomerism — Always Be Comfortable.

The first night, she rolled out the new sleeping bag and turned her head for a quarter of a second to reach for a nightgown. Like a black flash, The Boomer pulled back the cover and ensconced himself in her new red sleeping bag.

I was a little less lucky. Last month on a short trip, we gave The Boomer a bone. It was just the way a wolf likes it — bright red meat, plenty of marrow, juicy and greasy.

But The Boomer didn't like the way the neighborhood dogs were eyeing his prize, so while I reached for a beer he shot into the tent and dined elegantly on top of my sleeping bag.

That reminds me: I've got to get my sleeping bag from the cleaners.

ONE FRIDAY morning a couple of years ago, The Boomer had minor surgery. That evening we went to see the infokink in St. Joe and watch the Blossom Parade.

Friday night I let The Boomer out for a last



The Boomer

call, not realizing he was still groggy from the anesthetic. When he didn't return, I figured the male dog was about his father's business, chasing females, and would return before dawn.

Dawn came and no Boomer. I searched the streets for three hours. Finally I called the St. Joe cops and described the little sweetheart. I had visions of him in the dog pound or the Humane Society shelter.

"Sir," said the desk sergeant, "I suggest you call the Holiday Inn."

There he was. The ladies who work the desk had found him at the door at 5 in the morning. They were pampering him and loving him up, and they were all having a great old time.

The Boomer practices what he preaches: Always Be Comfortable.



**Nancy Walls Smith**

## This is a zoo, not our home

This place is turning into a zoo! This morning, when I took the most recent headcount of the wildlife this family is harboring (excluding our 5 and 6-year-olds), I came up with:

- One cocker spaniel dog whose main joy in life is to run out the front door every time a child opens it. If you have children, you know that means about 500 or 600 times a day.

- Six tropical fish, one of which is looking quite sickly and, for some strange reason, is bringing out all of my maternal "sickbed" instincts. I hover around the tank alot with a concerned look in my face. I would take its temperature if I knew how.

- One crayfish recently found in a neighborhood creek by my six-year-old son. What does one feed a crayfish?

- Two toads. This number is greatly subject to change. We have daily escapes and frequent new arrivals. We feed them bugs, give them water, and I scream whenever one is brought into the house.

- One garter snake. My sons assure me that he is just a temporary boarder. That reptile couldn't leave soon enough as far as I'm concerned!

- Three minnows found in that same neighborhood creek. Aren't we lucky.

- At least 40 or 50 polywogs in several different stages of polywogism. The creek again.

- And last, but certainly not least, one stray female cat that hasn't been "fixed." My eldest son brought her home several weeks ago. I told both him and the cat that I was dead set against the idea of her staying. Neither of them paid any attention to me.

We're calling her "Flossie."

I GREW UP in a city covered with cement.

The first time I saw a snake that wasn't at the Detroit Zoo was when we moved to Canton four years ago. I let out a blood-curdling scream that couldn't have been any louder if I had seen King Kong in my backyard. Today I've become so blasé about snakes that I've even picked up a few — with the aid of a long handled shovel, of course.

My 6-year-old's first grade teacher told me that he has a great interest in science, and that we should cultivate it. If his interest gets any more cultivated than this, I don't think I'll be able to stand it!

My very favorite part of living in this wildlife station is chasing that danged dog everytime he gets out of the house. He loves to bark. And he sounds mean.

Recently, while I was whiling away the afternoon working on my fan in the backyard, my sons ran around the house yelling that the dog had escaped again. He was across the street at a neighbor's garage sale barking at, and generally annoying, innocent browsers.

All I had was a bikini and a ton of suntan oil. I don't even wear that particular bathing suit to the beach (too fat!) — I certainly had no intention of wearing it to a garage sale.

Have you ever seen a greased-down chubby woman in a bikini and a yellow raincoat chasing a dog through the entire neighborhood? By the looks on their faces, I don't think those garage sale shoppers had either.

I think I'll just hide in my house for the rest of the summer.

## Society demands much better readers

Why can't Johnny read?

Or, more to the point, what can't Johnny read?

An interesting conference was held last month at the University of Michigan on helping the workforce meet future demands for literacy.

Interesting because it is usually employers who complain loudest that high school graduates these days are not literate, or at least not literate enough to work efficiently.

In my experience, it is businessmen who most often ask, "Why can't Johnny read?" And the question is asked so often that it is almost accepted as fact that he can't read.

Others have already answered that Johnny may be a fairly adequate reader but is unable to read the same words known by the current generation. His vocabulary is different than mine, that's all.

That seems to beg the question if Johnny's reading vocabulary is such that he cannot perform on the job. This circular kind of reasoning and probing almost gets you nowhere. But a good point was made at the U-M workshop by Richard W. Bailey, a professor of English at the university.

"This is an appropriate time to examine and predict change in literacy," says Bailey. "More people read and write on the job today than ever before. Despite prevailing wisdom that in this age of television fewer people read and comprehend what they have read, we know that the range of occupations requiring high levels of reading and writing is greater than ever."

"Today's service agencies and police departments, for example, require composition skills far superior to those common a decade ago. Quite sophisticated literacy in many occupations is essential for success on the job."

...we know that the range of occupations requiring high levels of reading and writing is greater than ever.

### Daniels' den

by Emory Daniels

If the professor is right, our problem is not that Johnny can't read, but that our job market requires a reading level far greater than is being taught in the schools.

In other words, our teachers are teaching one set of words at one level and our job-makers are liking a language consisting of an entirely different set of words at a higher level. Johnny is learning what he is being taught, but those mastered lessons aren't aligning very well with the expectations of the marketplace.

That was the main goal of the workshop — to lessen the gap between the workplace and what is being taught in the classroom in order to raise the level of literacy of the American workforce.

SUCH AN AIM, of course, may never be reached.

Society is changing so rapidly that we may never be able to adequately teach today's students to equip him/herself to cope with tomorrow's society. It's the Future Shock game, and maybe we can't win.

Our schools have just finished changing curriculum to teach students the language of the technological age, and here we are in the electronic age. The gap may always be there.

As I think about how fast our language is growing and becoming outdated, I also am thinking about how fast changes are occurring in the way we produce words for others to read.

In the generation of journalists preceding me, a reporter would print or write the story in longhand and then hand it to the printer for typesetting.

When I entered the trade in the mid-1960s, we

produced words with standard typewriters (mostly Royals and Underwoods). The story was typed, edited and then given to a typesetter to punch out on a linotype machine. And so I had to know how to type to be able to produce words for a newspaper.

In very short time, the change was made to electric typewriters (mostly IBM) with our copy being edited and run through a scanner to transpose our words into language which could be translated by a computer. The computer set my words in type.

And then reporters had their electric typewriters taken away and were given television screens with a keyboard. The words are typed onto the screen, edited, instantly corrected and dumped into the computer which then sets it into type exactly the way the reporter typed it.

I still have my electric typewriter but have watched fellow writers use the VDT's (video display terminals) which will replace my IBM OCR (optical character recognition) system within the near future.

The point is that not only has the words of my trade changed, but the means used to produce those words have changed drastically. And so I have to have some understanding of the computer language to produce words you can read.

Yet the last time I was in a newsroom at a university, the reporters were sitting behind standard typewriters while out in the field we are getting ready to junk our electric typewriters. A gap of another sort.

No wonder educators have problems keeping up with society. No wonder employers wonder whether Johnny is literate.

The standard of literacy today is very high, and the means of producing literate goods is changing rapidly.

Tomorrow, they say, I will be writing words on a television screen which will appear on a television screen in your home via cable.

Watch out, Johnny, here comes Future Shock!