

You don't have to go far from home to find some peace and quiet this summer. This pleasant scene was found along the banks of the Rouge River.

Take advantage of summer

IT'S SUMMERTIME, and the livin' is — if not easy — at least different.

With the middle of summer, we've noticed a marked decline in community activities. Vacations, hot weather and cool swimming pools have forced cancellation of numerous events. Civic actions and community projects are put on hold while residents turn to their own affairs.

It's as if the community itself were taking a breather in the summer.

Voting gives way to boating as the most important concern. Folks who normally keep an eye on official doings now stare at sizzling steaks.

We can't blame anybody. Summertime, after all, is a time to relax and recharge. And the community, left to itself, will somehow perk along and survive.

WE, IN FACT, URGE residents to leave town for a while this summer. Even if it's only for a

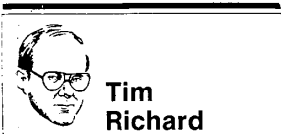
weekend to visit relatives, the time away is necessary.

During a vacation away from home, it's easier to get a perspective on life and on your own community. That added insight sometimes lets you see the problems and the advantages to this place we call home.

Admittedly, vacations aren't supposed to have any serious intent. Vacations are just supposed to be fun. So we certainly aren't suggesting that you use your vacation time to make a detailed study of your vacation environment.

All we suggest is that you be careful, have a good time and come back ready to tackle the problems of the community.

It'll all be here when you come back this fall. The problems will still be here and so will those good points, the things that brought you here in the first place.



Tim Richard

West gloats over victory on coal tax

I needed no passport. The merchants, fellow campers and National Forest Service folks were as friendly and nice as could be.

But there is no doubt Montana and Wyoming have a collective mad on against us in the industrial northeast and Midwest. And they are gloating over their recent U.S. Supreme Court victory.

Earlier this year, I wrote about Montana's 30 percent and Wyoming's 17 percent "severance" tax on coal, oil and other energy resources. Detroit Edison Co. has a 30-year contract to buy Decker Coal from Montana. Part of our high electric bill is that Montana tax.

The Supreme Court said such whopping tax rates are no violation of the U.S. Constitution. All right. Neither are sexual perversion and fur-trapping. But they are not things people in a polite society usually do.

MONTANA'S SIDE of the story came to me from conversations, a number of news broadcasts caught on the car radio and an editorial in the Billings Gazette. All said the same thing.

"For a century or more," said the Gazette, "the political entities now feared as superstates (meaning Montana and Wyoming) served as 'profit opportunities' for the wealthy of the (northeast) states

"Who made the money off the rape of Montana? In exchange for a few backbreaking jobs under some pretty awful conditions both at home and at work, Montanans have seen their natural resources chopped from the hillsides and ripped from the ground.

"Who got the profits? It wasn't the miner or the lumberjack or the city, county and state in which he lived.

"(Profits went to) the benevolent investor clipping his coupons somewhere back there."

The theme that a few big companies controlled in New York exploited Montana's resources for years is a common one in western thinking. The Billings Gazette's hate-the-East attitude is pretty typical.

THE LOGIC is childish, of course.

If rich coupon-clippers in New York were raping western natural resources, why didn't Montana's Legislature crack down, the way we in Michigan have passed labor laws and worked to protect the Pigeon River Country, the sand dunes, the rivers and a dozen other natural wonders?

And if those New York coupon-clippers are the capitalists, why should Montana condemn every homeowner, shop, school, hospital, orphanage, unemployed adult worker, church and senior citizen to paying its 30 percent coal tax through their electric bills?

When you see an entire group (blacks, Jews, eastern states) being retaliated against for the alleged sins of a few, you know you are dealing with bigotry.

One characteristic of a bigot is that he can deal politely with an individual in a group but still hate the group. That's why camping in Montana and Wyoming is so nice, but paying a 30 percent severance tax in the Edison bill isn't. (Montana incidentally has no sales tax.)

OUR WESTERN neighbors say they need those hefty taxes "to soften the economic and social impact on the communities involved" in coal mining and, in the words of the Billings Gazette editorial,

Is that so? Well, in Laramie, a Wyoming college, ranching and tourist town untouched by coal's impact, the city council is using \$850,000 in "mineral severance monies" to pay for its share of a new sewage treatment plant, the Daily Boomerang reported.

We in southeastern Michigan have seen our sewage bills triple and quadruple to pay for additions to the Detroit sewage treatment plant. So now easterners are also helping to pay for Laramie's plant through Wyoming's 17 percent severance tax.

'Howdy, Partner!'



from our readers

Safe cycling will benefit all

To the editor:

Citizens in Beverly Hills and Bingham Farms lobbied for bikepath/sidewalks. They would have been content with any safe path that separated children from rapidly moving traffic on major roads leading to schools, although they recognized the ecological-health-recreational benefits of walking and cycling for all.

The experienced cyclist (e.g. one who has traveled 20,000 miles) objects, however, to what often becomes multi-purpose community paths being labeled "bikepaths," for then the law mandates he use them. At the higher speed he travels, not only must he be more alert at intersections, he must also watch for pedestrians, joggers, inexperienced adult cyclists and the abrupt movements of young children. He would prefer to use slightly widened roads and perhaps for this reason Oakland County has sometimes avoided bikepath signatures.

There is no simple solution to safe cycling. As Tom Pendleton, Ann Arbor's Bicycle Coordinator, states, safe cycling depends on a combination of factors called the three E's: education, enforcement of existing safety rules, and engineering. When safe facilities are provided, the final E, encouragement to cycle, will follow.

If Effective Cycling was offered like driver's education, there would always remain many who had not taken the course, and the problem of young and inexperienced adult cyclists would persist.

The Oakland County Road Commission is trying to find the most appropriate non-motorized transportation system for each particular situation. They have been encouraging local planning officials to connect subdivisions with foot-bike paths so children do not have to use major roads, widen less traveled roads to allow for bicycle travel, and on major roads, especially where schools are located, construct off-street paths.

Although non-motorized paths are not cheap, they cost far less than motorized transportation. Looking to the future, as federal and state governments become less able to finance transportation and as the number of senior citizens increases while students decrease, even wealthier districts may have difficulty raising taxes to pay for transporting students who could walk or bike to school.

Experienced cyclists have much to contribute in designing non-motorized paths. Compromises are inevitable, but ultimately agreed safe solutions to the problems of non-motorized transportation will benefit all.

Sandra Kennedy
Birmingham

B'ham center a great idea

To the editor:

Last summer I discovered an old abandoned junior high school formerly called Barnum. Soon I learned that it had been converted into a center for continuing education for at least five major Michigan universities. Through this center it is possible to take extension courses from the same university one attended during the school year.

For me, this was a great opportunity because I have attended three different colleges, and trying to transfer credits from one to another can be a real hassle. Most of the classes are evening courses which enables one to work a 9-5 p.m. job and still be able to make use of those long summer evenings.

Hats off to the originators of this system for providing university extension courses to the suburbs of Detroit.

Lynne Tuttle
Bloomfield Hills



A prayer for public education

Summer has a way of cooling political tempers and dampening the ardor of even the most doctrinaire among us.

Even militants enjoy dog days in the sun, especially in Michigan, where warmth is a rare and valued commodity.

But educators and school board trustees, beware. You're in for a long, hot fall. Cross district busing is going to look like an English lawn party after the debate over prayer in school gets rolling.

Already, one can see those nasty little seeds of discontent pushing through the dirt. Take the other day, for instance.

A FRIEND called to report back from vacation. But instead of spending a few minutes discussing leisurely pursuits of summer, we found ourselves engaged in a heated debate over praying, of all things.

I've got to tell you right off, pro or con, this really is a dumb issue. Unfortunately, an inordinate amount of hot air is going to be expended, while other, more important issues are neglected.

As I told my friend, debating whether our children should be allowed to pray in school hardly matters when, if public education continues on its present course, there won't be any public schools in another decade in which to pray.

PUBLIC EDUCATION is in bad shape. Whether it be in large cities or suburban communities, public schools are suffering from a cancerous lack of interest by those who finance it.

More and more persons are giving up on public education. Those who can afford it are opting to send their children to private schools.

Already in some parts of the country, public schools are being left to the poor and the minorities. Recently, I read an essay by American historian Henry Steele Commager, who outlined America's traditional "tasks" assigned to education. He noted education was the American religion since the Law of 1647 was established in the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

"It was — and is — in education that we put our faith; it is our schools and colleges that are the peculiar objects of public largess and private beneficence, even in architecture we proclaim our devotion, building school like cathedrals," he says.

Commager goes on to list the four tasks:

- Providing an enlightened citizenry in order that self-government might work.
- Creating national unity.
- Educating immigrants to become productive members of our society.
- Overcoming divisive forces in society and advancing understanding and equality.

THOSE ARE pretty hefty goals, ambitious objectives we can all support. Unfortunately, we have turned away from these goals to bend and to break before the whims of special interest minorities who are attempting to mold American education to their way of thinking.

I just pray (to myself, of course) that this country comes to its senses before we ruin the foundation on which this country was built — public education.



discover Michigan

Bill Stockwell

Did you know that Michigan's reputation in the building of fine furniture can be traced back to walnut coffins? It seems that the most famous furniture maker of those earlier days — a man named Heldane — gained fame first as the maker of high quality walnut coffins.