



By Philip H. Power
Publisher

The whole question of black people living in the suburbs -- surely one of the most charged issues facing us today -- broke into the news over the weekend.

• The New York Times carried a story on a research report which suggested that, contrary to all expectations, Negro migration to the suburbs appears to be sharply rising.

• Out in this area, the long-simmering dispute between the mainly black residents of Westland's Annapolis Park subdivision and the city's needs for industrial development finally came to the surface. The city wants to put a 32-acre industrial park right next door to the subdivision; the residents contend that the park would damage the neighborhood and block further development of Negro housing in the area.

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THE RESEARCH STUDY, written by a Harvard Business School professor, concluded: "Blacks finally appear, to be moving throughout the metropolitan region in something like the way that other immigrants did before them."

"We can anticipate a gradual decline of the younger black generation in the central city, its emergence in the inner suburbs, and, as black income increases still further, its entry into today's outer, wealthier suburbs," the study says.

Census Bureau data used for the study showed that in the early 1960s, central cities gained in black population at the rate of 400,000 a year, while suburbs gained at the rate of 52,000. Late in the decade, however, central city gains dropped to 262,000 a year, while suburban gains rose to 85,000.

The study also concluded that Negroes moving to suburban homes tended to be younger and better educated than average, indicating they are better able to find good jobs than those remaining in the central city.

IN THE LONG run, the study may be correct. But that doesn't help the Negro residents of Annapolis Park, who feel they are being swamped by the wishes of a nearly all-white city.

"In Westland, we have 1,282 registered black voters, and 442 voted in the last election," says subdivision leader C.R. Patton. "No one is going to be concerned about 442 people who voted in a city of 89,000."

Westland Mayor Eugene McKinney and other city officials cite the need for industrial tax base, and point out that any rezoning proposal of this sort always produces problems.

Ralph Rowan, another Negro leader in Annapolis Park, says, "We have done everything we possibly can to make the people understand that this is not a matter of our being against industrial development. We are trying to make them understand that this territory is more or less needed for the expansion of black people away from the inner city."

McKinney says that the city has plans for other areas to make room for Negro residents.

LAST YEAR, this newspaper conducted a survey on the aftermaths of the 1967 Detroit riot. The main conclusion was that while no substantial increase of Negro residents in the suburbs had taken place, there had occurred a slight but significant shift in white attitudes.

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For those already in established professions, there are courses for firemen, policemen, photographers, urban planners and others who need specific courses to keep up with the latest advancements in their fields.

For those adults who feel that a community college is mostly attended by recently-graduated high school seniors, they should know that the average age of a Wayne County community college student is 27.

FOR THOSE who never finished high school, there is a place for them at the Wayne County college. Last year, 5% of the first semester's 9,000 students were high school dropouts.

Many school tax proposals have been rejected by voters who are concerned about what they are getting for their money.

If there is any doubt about the value of the college dollar, just ask any one of the 18,000 students who enrolled during the first full school year.

OBSERVATION POINT

Suburban Integration Showing Progress, Strains

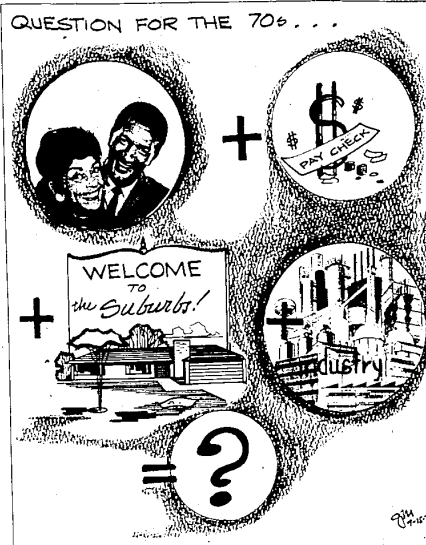
Whereas in 1967 the white attitude toward a black moving in next door would have been unalterably opposed, in 1969 we found that people were prepared to judge the question more on the kind of person moving in than on the color of his skin. "If he has the kind of income needed to buy a house, if he treats his kids well and maintains his house, if he cuts his lawn -- well, I guess it would be all right," seemed to be the attitude.

The recent report bears out the results of our survey. It also indicates that as Negroes become better educated and get better jobs, they will start moving into the suburbs just like any other ethnic group. Income is still the key issue.

But in the short run, as long as Negroes are still a very small minority in the suburbs and as long as the processes of racial integration are slow, black suburbanites are going to feel like a minority group.

Their feelings probably will be justified.

But personally, I look forward to the day when people are going to beef at a rezoning, not because it cuts off area for Negro settlement, but rather because it lousies up their streets and lawns.



Leonard Poger writes

Our College For All Ages

While most of the quantity of political news is coming from legislative candidates, the bulk of the quality on the Aug. 4 primary ballot is provided from a tax issue getting little, if any, public notice.

The primary ballot will include partisan candidates for governor, U.S. senator, state senator and representative, county commissioner, non-partisan judicial positions and township board candidates.

Those candidates are making the most noise in the summer campaign but Wayne County voters in Redford Township and part of Westland can demonstrate that they really know something about other issues on the ballot by reviewing the property tax proposed by the Wayne County Community College.

THE COLLEGE, in existence for nearly one year, covers all of Wayne County not now served by an existing community college system. Those eligible to vote on the one-mill tax (\$1 per \$1,000 of state equalized valuation) are voters in the Wayne Community School District in Westland, Westland residents in the defunct Nankin Mills district, and all of Redford Township.

The reasons for emphasizing the college property tax are many:

The college now operates solely from a State Legislature grant, funds from New Detroit, Inc., and students' tuition fees.

It needs a local tax levy to avoid losing a future state aid grant from the Legislature.

The college provides a needed educational facility for thousands of recent high school graduates planning on a college career, adults who need additional vocational or technical training; adults of all ages who just want to learn a bit more about a specific subject.

HOUSEWIVES WHO want to make their grocery dollar stretch a little bit more in today's inflated economy can take a course in consumer rights and remedies.

With computers playing a larger role in today's business firms, there are a variety of computer classes offered to students.

For the more practical minded, there are courses on drafting, electronics and electricity; printing; and six courses in secretarial work.

For those already in established professions, there are courses for firemen, policemen, photographers, urban planners and others who need specific courses to keep up with the latest advancements in their fields.

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R.T. Thompson writes

Visits From The Dogs

This is the time of the year when a suburbanite wonders whether man's best friend is a friend only to his owner and public enemy No. 1 to all those who take a great deal of pride in their lawns, shrubs and landscaping.

For some time we have been wondering about those white spots that suddenly appeared in the middle of the front yard, and we'll have to admit that our lawn isn't the most beautiful in the neighborhood, even though we stage a weekly battle with a power mower.

But those pesky spots caused considerable concern until we talked with a neighbor who does put in long hours of yard work and is almost an expert on care and attention of the grass and shrubs.

"Those white spots," he exclaimed, "they are caused by some of our friendly neighbors on the next streets bringing their dogs around shortly after dusk and encouraging them to visit the shrubs and lawns here rather than their own yards. For a few days, the spots won't be white, there'll just be bare spots caused by man's best friend doing a bit of leaf lifting."

IT ISN'T THAT we're com-

plaining about the nightly visits of the neighborhood pooches, some of whom come from as many as three and four blocks away, but we do feel that the owners should have a bit of compassion and take their dogs to other streets...not the same one all the time.

Normally we aren't great lovers of any kind of pets even though we like to pat dogs on the head, rub the backs of cats and stay as far as possible from the other types that go with a neighborhood full of youngsters.

But it is our opinion that enough is enough, and we're getting a bit tired of starting to mow the lawn and then suddenly finding a need for a shovel. Seems like dogs make deposits, whether large or small, and the only logical way to take care of these deposits is with a large shovel.

We aren't bothered that much by having to make quick trips to the toolshed for the shovel, but when one is moving along cutting down the grass and suddenly there is a plop -- well, that is a bit disheartening and usually means cleaning the blade.

THEN, TOO, the things one finds when he gets out his hedge trimmer and edger and starts cutting down the shrubs, such

things as dead spots around the roots and oftentimes deposits that one steps in before he realizes there is anything amiss.

The dead spots mean that one has to trim off that section of the bushes and then start thinking of getting some of those liquids that are guaranteed to keep dogs and cats away. Perhaps there is some kind of a liquor, not the kind dispensed in a state liquor store that might keep the owners away especially on their nightly sojourns.

And once again, we don't object to pets; we think they are great for the kids, but when they make their stops in the back yard as well as the front...then that's something else again.

We aren't the greatest advocate of gardening, but when we have to use the shovel six or eight times in one mowing of the back yard, clean the mower a couple of times and then grab a stick to remove some things from the soles of the shoes...well, who wouldn't be a bit irate?

All that we're suggesting is that the owners and their pets visit other streets, perhaps divide the evening strolls so that one street doesn't get their undivided attention. We don't think that's too much to ask of suburbanites.

Sense And Nonsense

The Post Office, which brought us zip code for speedier mail service, has come up with another dandy: shorter addresses.

Let's hope they start with Albuquerque. It's tough trying to remember to add that "w" in the middle. Or adding that extra "m" in Cincinnati.

Tim Richard writes

A Grass Roots Threat

Who's afraid of Spiro Agnew? When the vice president of the U.S. cusses out the broadcasters and columnists, he does it out in the open. If he has tried any underhanded skulduggery against the media, we haven't heard about it.

A greater threat against the public's right to information and knowledge of public affairs occurs at the local level. The "community" level, if you will. The halloved "grass roots" level.

ITEM: The Farmington Board of Education overturned a precedent by which trustee Gary Lichtman would be elected president, and its five-man majority instead picked John Washburn III for the top job.

The board, of course, has a right to select whomever it wishes and for whatever reasons it wishes. Unfortunately, the majority gave no reasons.

Washburn and another trustee found they had been dumped for officers' posts. They nevertheless made their nominations and gave their reasons with calm, rational dignity.

The majority, whose behind-the-scenes machinations were led by Richard Peters, had no such courtesy. All Peters' gang did was go through the parliamentary motions. We slob of the press and public get no explanation.

ITEM: The Farmington Board of Education stopped at about

item 8 on the agenda and walks out of the meeting room.

It goes into Supt. James Rossman's office, there to conduct a closed-door secret hearing on whether to fire a teacher. Everyone else must cool his heels for 90 minutes or so.

Our reporter stuck it out. The board finally came back into open session and passed a wordy resolution saying it was firing the teacher "based on the facts disclosed." Unfortunately, the "facts disclosed" were not disclosed. The board didn't reveal all the facts, half the facts or any of the facts.

ITEM: from the Free Press story of the WXYZ strike: "Earlier Wednesday, before

the settlement, Mayor Gribbs canceled a press conference when two labor leaders, Tom Turner and Marcellus Ivory, told Gribbs they did not want to appear before a camera manned by a Channel 7 supervisor" (not a union man).

"Turner is president of the metropolitan Wayne County AFL-CIO. Ivory is a regional director of the United Auto Workers."

The message is clear: You send a union member to cover me or you don't get a public story.

Who's afraid of Spiro Agnew? Our home town, grass roots, friendly community leaders are nastier any of day.

Editorial & Opinion

OBSERVER NEWSPAPERS, INC.

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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

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Livonia, Plymouth, Farmington, Redford Township, Garden City, Westland,
Farmington Township, Redford Township, Garden City, Westland,
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