

OBSERVATION POINT

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.



By Philip H. Power

Summer's End Brings Rebirth Of The Arts

We get to thinking, in our town councils, about industry and business because they mean jobs and they pay taxes to our hungry schools.

But it takes more than industry and commerce, good government and schools, churches and civic associations, to make a community.

It takes the arts. Culture. Drama and music. Recitals, Lectures.

Many suburbanites head for Detroit, or Ann Arbor for an evening with the arts; but the truth is that the arts are vigorous right out here. Sometimes the groups are financially shaky, but always they have a lot of enthusiasm. In today's edition, with Labor Day having marked the unofficial end of summer, you'll start to see the announcements of the blossoming arts.

THE COMMUNITY colleges are doing some of the most interesting things. Born as vocational-technical schools and college prep spots, the community colleges, in the last couple of years have turned into bastions of the arts. Take Schoolcraft College. At this writing, Gen. Maxwell Taylor is scheduled to speak Thursday (though there's a chance the faculty walk-out may force cancellation), and he's just the first big name in the humanities series that also will feature poets, films and musical events.

Oakland Community College has what's called a "Contrast Series" of speakers, plays, films. Some are at the Orchard Ridge campus on I-696 in Farmington; other events are elsewhere.

We've paid good taxes to build the places and sometimes to subsidize the events. We ought, to enjoy them, too.

TWO ORCHESTRAS merit support.

The Plymouth Symphony will be in its 25th year. It will certainly be the best — not just because Plymouth is growing but because it has a beautiful new high school with an auditorium that, at last, is worthy of its excellent programs. There are six concerts a year, they're free, and people come from all over to hear them.

For a tight-budget operation, the Redford Civic Symphony does wonders, and it has four concerts a year, alternating between the two high schools in Redford Township. They'll surprise you.

I've mentioned only orchestras, but the folks in Farmington shouldn't be overlooked because they have a fairly new Concert Band — a charming addition to a charming community.

FROM FALL THROUGH spring, one theatrical group or another is always presenting a

good show. The groups are named for the towns in which they're located, but the truth is that theater lovers and actors ignore local boundaries when they want to see or act in a first-rate play.

It's far from small town amateurism, a lot of it. If you haven't noticed, these suburbs have many people with professional experience who have given up professional acting and singing to lead normal home-lives in suburbia, but they still are devoted to their arts and you can see them out here, cheap.

Farmington Players operate from a delightful old barn on 12 Mile Road.

Theater Guild of Livonia-Redford has a store front office and rehearsal place on Beech-Daly and performs mostly in high schools.

Wayne Civic Players present three plays, and you don't want to miss the series of one-acts

later in the season. They rehearse at 1340 Harvey, a block west of Wayne Road in Westland, and perform mostly in John Glenn High School.

The Plymouth Theater Guild has had troubles galore, but there's a chance they'll come back.

I've only mentioned adult fare. There are so many youth entertainment and performing groups that it's difficult to keep track.

AT THIS POINT I shudder. Whom did I forget? The odds are that I missed someone, but no matter:

Just keep watching the entertainment pages of this paper. Casting calls. Volunteers for stage hands. Notes on fund-raising activities. Announcements of performances.

Give 'em a hand. And enjoy them all.

One Of Our Own On The Ticket

One of the things that disturbs many of the Democratic faithful about Livonia Mayor Edward McNamara is that his name may draw a blank from voters outside the south Oakland-Western Wayne County area.

This, they feel, may hinder the election chances of Sander Levin, the Democrat standard-bearer in the gubernatorial race.

But the die has been cast and McNamara, as the No. 2 man on the Democratic ticket this year, is most certainly aware of the monumental task ahead of him. And if the past is any indication of the future, he will leave no stone unturned in his campaign to make every voter in the state aware of the fact that McNamara isn't just a guy who leads an Irish band.

No matter what their politics, Observerland residents should be proud of the fact that one of their own has been chosen to run for lieutenant governor, an office that can be mighty effective if the man who owns it sets out to make it so.

It's certainly true that Mayor McNamara's name is not a household word in Michigan at the moment, but then neither was Spiro Agnew's when he was picked as President Nixon's running mate.

For the prestige of all Observerland, let's hope the Livonia Irishman's name gains recognition throughout the state.

Let's hope McNamara emulates Spiro in the name game — if not exactly for the same reasons. —The Masked Avenger

Stop Scare Stories In City, Suburbs

(Reprinted from the Detroit Free Press)

THOSE who have been adding to the tensions between city and suburb, whether inadvertently or for profit, are doing neither any favor. Detroiters are Detroiters, and so are those who live outside the corporate limits in the suburbs.

Thus, the scare stories about an attempt by the Department of Housing and Urban Development to break the "white noise" around Detroit are a disservice,

as was Councilman Dave Eberhard's misconceived statement on charging tolls to suburbanites entering Detroit.

It is a fact that the suburbs have been subsidized by the federal government — FHA and VA loans are the stuff of which many of them have been built — and it is also a fact that they face the long-term prospect of being integrated. The laws governing federal grants say they cannot keep blacks out, and, more important, the laws of economics say so.

As blacks achieve middle-class status in greater numbers, more of them are going to be scattering throughout the metropolitan area. And if the Department of Housing and Urban Development did not require non-discriminatory practices on the part of these suburbs, it would be defaulting on its duty.

So the dark reports about some sort of conspiracy against Warren and other suburbs simply play to fears. The idea of any sort of large-scale "black invasion" of the suburbs is absurd.

There is no inherent conflict between this ideal and regional cooperation, or between this ideal and the aim of an integrated society.

Needed: Weapons to Match the Monster



Bob McClellan

Racing Boss Is Running Behind

As we understand it, a mating between two animals has to occur to produce a jackass. Well, in Livonia recently, State Racing Commissioner Leo C. Shirley managed to make one of himself without benefit of the biological process.

Shirley, obviously and crudely, tried to shake up Livonia Mayor Edward McNamara and other city officials with the comment that the state might consider operating a horse race track of its own at the Old State Fair grounds oval in Detroit. This ploy apparently was designed to intimidate the mayor and his people from getting too vociferous in their demands that the state up Livonia's take from betting proceeds at the Detroit Race Course.

THE CITY NOW receives \$600,000 annually from the state's share of DRC profits. This amounts to seven per cent of the city budget. Years ago, when the track first began operation in Livonia, the city got \$500,000 a year from the state, which amounted to 97 per cent of the community's budget.

McNamara & Co. have pointed out, and justifiably so, that costs for things like police and fire, services, road repairs, etc., have gone up, and that the city deserves a proportionately larger share of the tax take.

The mayor and his people are also concerned that Shirley may lengthen the number of racing days at DRC in the future — a situation that would generate greater problems and expense for the city — without additionally compensating Livonia for it. Thus, McNamara and his men request that Shirley ask the Michigan Legislature to earmark more

race track money for the city. And thus Shirley's remark about a state-operated horse race-betting setup in Detroit.

THAT COMMENT baldly and blatantly indicated Shirley's childish response to Livonia's request and also pointed up his dearth of knowledge about his job.

Just why the State Fair grounds would be the last place for the state to run a horse-betting track was logically and concisely recorded by Columnist Doc Minard in the Observer Newspapers. So we won't debate that point with Shirley here, only comment that it's unfortunate for the people of Michigan that their racing commissioner appears to know less about his work than our turf writer.

How much good, if any, Shirley has done in his post for the state is debatable. State Sen. William Faust (D-Westland) remarked during his primary campaign that the only time he or his colleagues ever had any dialog with the racing commissioner was when Shirley was making a request that the Legislature add more help to his staff.

Faust, who has been in Lansing four years, said he could not recall Shirley's ever making a recommendation or advocating a program designed to advance horse racing in Michigan.

IF THE BETTORS or track owners have any love for Shirley, it would be hard to find a reason for it.

For some mysterious reason the racing commissioner has not seen fit to try to provide horse racing in Michigan during the winter months. So during this time the track owner pays taxes and overhead to maintain an empty plant, and the bettor drives to Windsor or all the way to Toledo to place a legal wager on a horse.

It is only now that Shirley-prodded by public track owner and horseman alike — is thinking about keeping horses running the year-round in this state. Shirley, who is supposed to be a front-runner for horse racing in Michigan, is usually dead last.

By SANDOR KALLAI

Manager, Meadow Brook Music Festival

The recent editorial by Tim Richard on Meadow Brook would seem to call for some kind of response from the Music Festival management. First, let me summarize his complaints:

1. At our Aug. 8 concert, he was unable to find chairs in the Baldwin Pavilion though he had paid for them;
2. He was treated discourteously by our box office personnel;
3. He was delayed by heavy traffic coming to the Festival;
4. There are insufficient aisles in the Pavilion;
5. There was inadequate lawn space to accommodate that segment of the audience, and
6. The Meadow Brook management is "money-grubbing" and over-sells its seating capacity.

MEADOW BROOK was host to 123,000 concertgoers this year, a new record and an increase of more than 70 per cent over last summer. This is a pleasant situation to be in, but one that carries with it many contingent problems.

For example, the automobile traffic in and out of the Festival grounds is heavy when the crowds are large. Walton Boulevard, our principal access road, was widened to four lanes over the winter to speed the flow, but there are other delaying factors often beyond our control, that cause tieups. We will keep working to overcome these.

There is, of course, no excuse for discourtesy no matter how harried a box office official might be on a busy night. Please be assured that such offenses will be corrected.

Objection No. 6 is totally invalid and grossly unfair. The Meadow Brook management has the unenviable job of having to raise each year a large sum of money in contributions from private individuals and corporations to bridge the gap between box office receipts and our huge expenses. There is no way to make Meadow Brook a paying proposition just as it is impossible for a university to "make money" on its tuition or a hospital on its charges to patients.

To cut off ticket sales before capacity is reached may make it more comfortable for those who do attend, but would only force us to go back to our already generous contributors for more money — obviously a tactic that would not work indefinitely.

Moreover we find that when we do cut sales, we receive hundreds of pleas from people who promise to be satisfied with any little patch of grass if we will only sell them tickets. Accordingly we have reached a compromise figure, about 6,500, which we feel produces adequate income without creating undue hardships for our concertgoers.

THE PROBLEM in the Pavilion (2,138 seats) arises when lawn ticketholders filter down, despite the best efforts of our excellent volunteer ushers, and take the permanent chairs, not from our overselling the Pavilion.

We are considering very seriously adopting a reserved-seat policy for next year and hiring a crew of paid, regular ushers, which steps we believe will insure Pavilion ticketholders of the seats they purchased.

It is our sincere belief that the overwhelming majority of Meadow Brook patrons enjoy themselves immensely when they attend our concerts. We see the same people time after time, a sign of good customer relations. Many express themselves enthusiastically to me and other members of our staff. People who come for the first time are delighted and express wonder that they could have overlooked such a fine form of summer entertainment for so long.

Editorial & Opinion

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Sense And Nonsense

Alas, all idols have feet of clay. We have patiently been awaiting guidance and counsel from Vice President Agnew and Ralph Nader on the two hottest

issues of the day, but neither of these daimonless crusaders has found the courage to take a stand on the matters of women's lib and skirt length.