

OBSERVATION POINT

DISSENT



By Philip H. Power
Publisher

No Single Project Will Make Clean River Of Dirty Rouge

If there's any one impression you get from reading about the Rouge River problem these days, it's not that the river is dirty — we all knew that — but that its dirtiness is so incredibly complex.

The Rouge has a lot of genuinely pretty spots, and a lot of people enjoy it, but it can and should be made even more useful and enjoyable. Yet no single project will get the job done.

What happened last week on the Middle Rouge, as we understand it, is that a "human error" at Ford's Livonia transmission plant allowed some red transmission oil to leak into the river. There's no need to explain to outdoorsmen what oil does to plant life, to ducks, to other water birds (there are some down there, you know) and to fish.

The company stopped the leak at the source, but that didn't solve the complex problem. As Livonia city officials pointed out to the company, there are "large quantities of oil residue which have been impounded in several backwater areas downstream." So the backwaters are a second part of the Rouge problem.

The company has promised to get to work on that, too.

Meanwhile, Ford is taking bids this week on some more water control facilities and expects to spend \$750,000 on them.

WHEN OBSERVER Newspapers learned about the oil leak, we sent our newsmen into the files on the Rouge, and up they came with a 1967 state Water Resources Commission report that showed Ford Motor Co. had a history of oil leaks going back to 1964.

But Frank Kallin, Ford's environmental manager, reports that this was a different kind of oil and that it didn't come from the plant itself but from outside the plant although on Ford property. The WRC describes that oil as "iridescent," which means it's the kind that makes circular rainbows when it floats down the river. The company says it got busy and stopped the oil after each report.

On a recent weekend, several Jaycee chapters in Oberlinland recruited their own members, school children, scouts and civic groups too numerous to mention to work on a project to clear the Rouge channel.

Not only did they remove entire autos and refrigerators, but they also picked up a zillion bottles and cans and hauled out probably tons of logs and branches that were blocking the river channel.

Their efforts will reduce flooding and cut down the number of stagnant pools of water that smell so foully and provide a breeding place for bugs. Many people swore you could see the river

flowing cleaner when they were through.

The same thing happened when the United Conservation Clubs worked on the main branch of the Rouge, which flows down from the Birmingham area, through Southfield and northwest Detroit.

A FOURTH KIND of problem, in addition to two kinds of oil leaks and a clogged channel, is the nutrients that literally fertilize the weeds in both the Middle Rouge River and the lakes along its course.

The Wayne County Road Commission tried a dose of poison to kill off the weeds on Wilcox Pond, and it didn't work. They doubled the dose, and it still didn't work. The pond was weed-choked until the frost.

Any more poison and there would have been a risk that it would harm the creatures that live in the pond. Some folks think there may have been harm as it was.

The same phenomenon was visible in the private Waterford Pond, north of Six Mile Road in Northville. The weeds parts of the pond get warm and can support only carp, although the few good sections of that lake support

gills, crappies, some small pike and some dandy largemouths.

Those fertilizing nutrients come from sewage. The scientific minds say more monitoring is needed to determine precisely how bad things are. The layman gets understandably impatient.

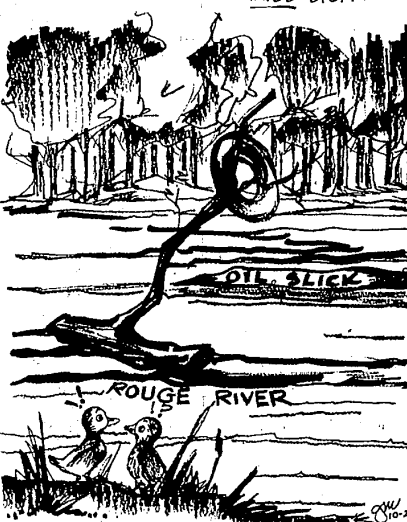
HENRY HERRICK, the former Great Lakes captain who is now the Wayne County drain commissioner, has offered one solution. It seems that sanitary sewage and storm water runoff are mixed in the present setup. During a heavy storm that water gets into the Rouge.

So "Cap" Herrick is proposing a parallel set of sewers to separate storm and sanitary sewer water. The price tag he has put on it is a staggering \$250 million — a quarter of a billion dollars!

We should all remain sore at companies and individuals who devastate any branch of the river that drains all seven Observerland communities, but at the same time we'll have to realize that the Rouge's many problems will require many solutions.

Some of the solutions should be charged to industry, some can come from volunteer labor. And some of the solutions will have to come from special assessments and taxes on all of us.

"LOOK HERMAN! HERE COMES SOME MORE OF THAT GREASY KIDS' STUFF!"



R.T. Thompson writes

Time To Stop Pre-Halloween Pranks

There's a date on the calendar that notes Saturday, Oct. 31 — Halloween.

But judging from the petty vandalism that already has started, there has to be a large number of juveniles, and perhaps a few who are a bit older, who can't read or don't pay any attention to dates if they can.

We have heard it mentioned quite freely that there is a reading problem in the elementary schools, and many of the students in that age group have considerable trouble reading their own names.

There was a time when we thought this was a gross exaggeration, but now we're firmly convinced that there are more addled-brained, thoughtless youngsters roaming the streets than at any other time.

MIND YOU, it isn't that we have anything against Halloween pranks if the pranksters wait until the proper night, but to have to put up with vandalism night after night — three weeks ahead of Oct. 31 — is something else.

Perhaps it's just a way of the kids telling merchants: If you

start the Christmas shopping season on Nov. 1, then why can't we start Halloween on Oct. 1.

That may make a bit of sense to the pranksters, but it doesn't make a bit of sense to homeowners and motorists who already have had to go out in the morning and scrape heavy wax from the windows of the cars and the house.

WHICH LEADS one to wonder just where are the parents of these youngsters who are allowed to prowl the streets of the suburban areas long after dark.

Most certainly the Dads and Moms must be aware that some-

thing is cooking that keeps their children out so late, and most certainly they have heard the complaints of neighbors about the pranks.

There was a time when most of us enjoyed the cry of "Trick or Treat" from the hundreds of kids as they went from house to house in their colorful attire early on Halloween eve.

But this matter of soaping and eggging windows, grinding wax into screens, tossing toilet tissue in every direction, ringing of doorbells and racing away and generally causing a lot of nuisances is something that turns homeowners against the tradition

of handing out candy gifts and coins on Halloween night.

It's about time for the parents of these pranksters to take notice of what their kids are doing. If it meets with their approval, then the only thing we can add is we hope that other youngsters in the neighborhood do the same pranks to them.

It may sound like tit for tat, and perhaps that's exactly what we're saying. The only thing we know is that Halloween comes on Saturday, Oct. 31, and we feel that's the time to celebrate — not nightly for three weeks in advance.

Bob McClellan

Takes Dim View Of Midis

My son is a student at MSU and he came home with some glowing news this week.

"So far, Dad," he exclaimed, "I've seen only one girl on campus wearing a midi."

My wife's report is not so cheery.

"Only a few of the girls at work are dressed in midis," she remarked, "but they're wearing pantsuits galore."

BUT AT LEAST this information tells me that the liberating sex is not going to let the fashion designers lead them like sheep—not this year, anyway.

Me, I prefer the mini. It gives me a chance to assess the full woman, you might say.

A step to the side or the rear and a glance from the professional eye can quickly determine the quality of a girl's posterior.

But a midi really puts you behind the eight ball when it comes to examining a shapely set of legs.

And, believe me, I like to inspect the whole woman.

I'm sure I'll be vilified in some quarters for admitting this.

The homosexuals will call me a queer. The Puritans will brand me a lecher and the more gracious will simply dismiss me as a dirty old man.

But, like most men, I'm just being honest.

I'm not like the politician I read about the other day.

THIS OLD hypocrite imposed a ban on the mini in his office domain, declaring he suffered acute embarrassment and looked away every time he saw a girl in a mini bending over a water fountain to take a drink.

I think the young and groovy girls should latch onto the mini and forsake all else.

Minis do wonders for the morale of this office, I tell you.

We've got one middle-aged editor who's a different guy after his special mini twitches past. He's normally sober and studious, but when his mini comes into view, his eyes take on a devilish glint, his lips assume a massive smile and his heart kicks up a rapid beat.

Down with the fashion experts and up with the mini!

Sense And Nonsense

At the Mayor's conference on pollution in Westland, in which attention was supposed to be focused on the Middle Rouge, none of the mayors knew where the stream started.

The closest anyone came was John Canfield, Dearborn Heights mayor, who said it started "somewhere in Oakland County."

Mayor John McEwan, of River Rouge; Mayor Royce Smith, of Belleville; Mayor Ed

McNamara of Livonia, and Mayor Eugene McKinney, the others present, couldn't help out.

Even Sen. Sander Levin, Democratic candidate for governor, missed the mark when he confided, "My mother used to swim in it when she was a girl in Birmingham."

Good going, but the Middle Rouge starts at Walled Lake, as careful readers of this paper know.

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 Mrs. Richard Schermerhorn
Wood Creek Farms
Farmington

I would like to express my opinion on the President's commission, on Campus unrest and smut. I believe the American people got the greatest WHITE WASH in our time. Why is it they don't acknowledge the fact that the Communists are behind most of our campus unrest and smut also.

An air of unreality and disbelief exists in much of America as unprovoked, unwarranted and unbelievable violence spreads from coast to coast. The daily news media in feature stories now belatedly admits that we are, perhaps in a state of "guerrilla warfare." Veteran law enforcement officials have been making this same assertion for some time.

WHAT IS CAUSING this wanton wave of violence across the face of our nation?

Police officers are victims of assassination in Detroit, Chicago, New York, Philadelphia and elsewhere—bombings are increasing with alarming frequency—arsonists—robbers—rapist and petty thugs roam the streets with apparent immunity.

Every effort at control of this lawless element is ridiculed by the professional "do gooders", blocked by timid politicians and outblacked by a permissive judiciary. Justice is not only delayed but many times denied.

The rights and privileges of the innocent victims and the long suffering public are subordinated to the so-called "rights" of the criminal. This seemingly insane, self-destructive philosophy is carrying this great nation to the brink of domestic disaster.

America needs to return to a good, old-fashioned, realistic sense of values. The honest, industrious, God-fearing men and women of this country need to be protected in their right to enjoy the privileges of a free and orderly society—a society free from threats and coercion from militant pressure groups—free from the lawlessness of unprincipled and unrestrained ruffians who roam our streets—free from the bombings and snipings of mad men who seek only to destroy, not build—free from premeditated disruption of our educational institutions at all levels from the kindergarten to the college campus and free from the ravages resulting from the filth, pornography, narcotics and other sediments of a corrupt society being thrust upon our youth.

How is this achieved? Through the insistence of the people that those chosen by them as their political leaders furnish the strength, courage, character and leadership to bring about a restoration of law and order, within the framework of equality and justice, in this country. The impetus must come from the people—the leadership must be furnished by those chosen to lead.

The permissive and slobbering tolerance of certain members of the judiciary must end—our campus administrators must stand tall as men of courage and devotion to principle—our law enforcement officers must have our respect and full support—we as citizens must insist that each man be held accountable under the law for his actions in a civilized society.

No longer can we tolerate the assassination of our police officers—the ever continuing increase in our crime rate—the destruction of our cities—the bombing of our public buildings and campus halls—the exposure of our youth to the degradation and horrors of drug traffic and the sickening servitude of certain officials to the howling mobs and the criminal rioter.

We must elect to public office men of courage and conviction who place principles above political expediency and who owe allegiance to none other than those they serve.

Editorial & Opinion

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