



By Philip H. Power
Publisher

OBSERVATION POINT

Lions' Move To Oakland Bittersweet For Suburbs

So Bill Ford has dropped the other shoe and announced he's going to move the Detroit Lions to a site in Pontiac.

He did it in a silly, unnecessary way. The men who have worked to build a new stadium in downtown Detroit have put a lot of hard work into the project, and for Ford to slam them as a bunch of promotion minded incompetents is nothing more than a cheap shot that does nothing useful except to make it easier for Ford to make an unpopular decision.

The point is that Ford owns the team and there is nothing that prevents him from doing with it what he wants to. He could move the Lions to Kalamazoo if he chose, and no one could stop him.

He might not make any money with the Kalamazoo Lions if he went that way, but that would have been his business.

The problem, of course, with the move to Oakland County is that changing the location of a regional institu-

tion like the Lions affects the sociology, economics and spirit of the entire metropolitan area.

FOR US LIVING in the suburbs, the move sounds nice, assuming it really happens.

It will be a lot easier for most folks living out this way to get to the proposed stadium site at I-75 and M-59 than it was to drive downtown.

Ford seems to think that parking facilities and traffic patterns at the Pontiac location will be better than those in downtown Detroit, and no one I've talked to has any reason to doubt him. Anyone who has tried to fight his way through the traffic jams at Tiger Stadium on a football Sunday would be pleased as punch to have a better traffic flow than now exists.

And, as Ford says, the population center of the entire metropolitan area will be — in fact now is — in the suburbs, in Oakland County. It only makes business sense to go where the

people are and where they're moving every day.

ON THE OTHER side of the coin lies the effect of the move on downtown Detroit, a depressed area in need of help.

Frankly, I think a lot of rubbish has been banded about concerning the terrific economic impact a new stadium would have on downtown Detroit.

The Lions will play seven regular season games at home this year, plus a couple of exhibition matches. These games are on Sundays, and you don't go shopping in Detroit late on a Sunday afternoon. Some stores are open on Sundays, but most are out here in the suburbs.

Some people might want to go to dinner or have a drink at the Lindell AC, but the restaurant and bar business isn't going to cure many of Detroit's economic ills.

THE REAL EFFECT of Ford's decision to move the Lions out of Detroit is not so

much economic as symbolic.

Lord knows, the city is suffering from just about every kind of problem man knows how to devise, but one of the things that the group of men trying to build the new stadium downtown were hoping for was that a successful job would give Detroit new spirit, renewed hope, and the chance to build on a success.

Ford's decision probably wrecks this hope, as it doesn't seem likely that a downtown stadium will be built merely on

the chance that the Tigers will stay there.

And to the degree that the hope of a new stadium is hurt, the City of Detroit is hurt.

That, in turn, affects the suburbs as much as anyone. For if there is any domino theory that really works, it is that if the City of Detroit goes down the drain so, too, do the suburbs in time.

That's why the decision to move the Lions to Oakland County is such a bittersweet one for us here in the suburbs.



'Spring' Zing Is Missing

By TIM RICHARD

Both major political parties will have state conventions the weekend of Feb. 13-14. They really don't need them, and the results are likely to make both look bad.

The Republicans have an apathy problem, and the Democrats will likely have a fight over something that isn't worth fighting about.

The reason they're having conventions is that under the 1908 state constitution, the voters in April used to elect the state highway commissioner, the superintendent of public instruction, State Supreme Court justices and members of the state education boards.

The parties held state conventions in February to nominate their candidates, and at the same time they picked their state party chairman and members of the state central committees.

So until the 1963 constitution took effect, those "spring" conventions in February made some sense.

TODAY, HOWEVER, we no longer hold an April election, so there's no one for the parties to nominate. Since there's no election, there's no reason to write a platform or pass resolutions that no one will read anyway. The state central committee members are picked from congressional districts, so there's no need to hold a fullscale state convention for that.

The only thing there is to do is elect a state chairman, which brings us to the Republicans' problem.

Bill McLaughlin, the young but grey party "pro" from Northville, is running for reelection as GOP state chairman. He has the blessing of Gov. Milliken, Sen. G riffin and anyone else of any importance. McLaughlin has no known enemies, and if he had, they wouldn't stand a chance.

So the Republicans are bored. As politicians, they're naturally combative people, but there's nothing to fight about. There are no real decisions to be made Feb. 13.

At last month's 19th District Oakland GOP convention, which this observer covered, only about 40 delegates showed up although there are 140 precincts in the area. They were thumbing phone books and calling friends to get names to fill the state convention delegation.

THAT BRINGS US to the Democrats' problem. They will probably have a contest over state chairman, but what they really want to fight about is resolutions.

As we get the drift from the daily papers and newsletters, the New Democratic Coalition wants to offer resolutions blaming "repression" for the arrest of Angela Davis, the black militant and communist held in connection with a courthouse shoot-out in California, and another on the Fathers Berrigan, the Catholic priests accused in a bomb-kidnap plot.

A political party has no business passing resolutions on matters that are in court, and no one with any brains will pay the slightest attention to those resolutions anyway. Nevertheless, a fight is likely. Possibly, part of the party will walk out; some have even suggested physical combat on the floor.

If any legislators are paying attention, they would do their parties a favor by abolishing the February state conventions and figuring out another way to elect the state chairman, which shouldn't be tough.

People have little enough respect for their institutions as it is without seeing the two major parties make fools of themselves over nothing.

Drug Fight Too Costly

By W.W. EDGAR

In these days of political maneuvering in which it is common practice to pass the buck or shrug off problems with the remark that "we have it under study," it is refreshing to meet an official with the candor of James L. Lowe, mayor of Garden City.

Faced with the mounting criticism from his own drug commission for lack of action in implementing a recommended program and cries on all sides that Garden City is on the verge of an epidemic in drug abuse, he countered with the remark:

"We have studied the recommendations, but we have neither the money nor the human skills to implement them. Frankly, it is my opinion that the drug problem is much too big for Garden City or any one community to handle."

"If the drug problem is to be licked, it must be done with the combined work of area communities, where the costs can be apportioned on a scale that can be met."

Such candor is refreshing.

There is considerable merit to his opinion that the problem can best be solved by the combined work of all area communities working as a unit.

There isn't a community in

the area that is immune to the drug abuse problem.

Each is in dire need of help in trying, in a meager way, to at least ease the problem.

POOLING THEIR resources and working together would be a means of making more headway.

But it's going to require the end of buck passing and political maneuvering.

It is going to require more officials with the candor of Mayor James L. Lowe who had the courage to state publicly:

"This problem is too big for Garden City or any other single community."

R.T. Thompson writes

When Will Bells Stop Tolling?

A fantasy, one might say. Unbelievable is the comment of many.

"It just can't happen in our community," is the way others, who just won't believe the grip drugs have on our younger folks, put it.

Then comes the day of awakening. The day one picks up a newspaper and learns the boy next door, or the girl who has been such a standout in school activities, has been found dead... victim of an overdose of drugs.

But the fact remains, the boy or the girl is dead and police authorities attribute it to an overdose while waiting for the official autopsy. And when it comes after several weeks, there's the diagnosis: "death due to an overdose of narcotics."

A horror-stricken father in Redford Township moans, and cries over the body of his 16-year-old son, hoping that what happened to his son will be a lesson for other youngsters in similar circumstances throughout the area.

IN LIVONIA, a mother of an 18-year-old tries to console herself over the bereavement with the hope that police may be able to halt the drug traffic in an industrial plant which she blames for her loss.

The toll?

A 16-year-old in Birmingham dies shortly after admission to a hospital — overdose.

A 16-year-old in Franklin found in a field lying on a blanket, dead for several days — reportedly an overdose.

An 18-year-old Livonia youth dead on arrival at the

hospital — reportedly an overdose.

A 16-year-old Redford Township boy found dead — apparently an overdose.

How many more of these incidents will it take to make the public realize that the drug problem is more than a small thing... it's time to declare war and use every means possible to check this dreadful habit.

The death toll mounts daily, perhaps not in Observerland but daily in some community in the metropolitan Detroit area. If only readers would take up the cudgel and start the fight... then perhaps we wouldn't receive letters such as follows from grieving parents:

"This may be a little late in expressing my sincere thanks, but due to the circumstances, I could not bring myself to it. Now, I feel I must and you are the only ones that could let other people know how I feel."

"On a brisk morning at about 3:30 a.m. on Nov. 18, 1970, the Livonia Police and the Livonia Fire Dept. were called to my home in an extreme effort to revive my 18-year-old son (name withheld), whom my husband and I had found on the bathroom floor and whom my husband was trying frantically to revive."

"The police and firemen arrived in a flash and took over immediately with every bit of equipment and hopeful effort, but it was all in vain."

"By the time we arrived at St. Mary Hospital in Livonia the doctors pronounced him dead on arrival."

"We had an autopsy and have not received the results yet, but we believe it was caused by an overdose of drugs which had other ingredients added to it."

"My son had a job at a plant and was working the afternoon shift, and was home a short time before we found him."

"We know that there is every kind of drug available at the plant, and I certainly hope someone can clean it up before any other young person has to indulge, suffer and finally die from it."

"Please won't you express my sincere thanks to the Livonia Police Dept. and the Livonia Fire Dept. for every bit of their determined effort to help a human being in need of dying help."

"There are not enough words to say, especially to the two young officers who tried to revive my son by mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. I know this is quite difficult, especially when there is dry, brownish matter foaming from the mouth and nose."

"I want them to know we did not forget them, because keep down in our hearts we know they were trying very hard to save my son's life."

"My son was a good boy, graduated from high school, and worked hard for three years. He shall never be forgotten."

"P.S. If there is anything I can do to help, in any way, to fight drugs, don't hesitate to call me."

Editorial & Opinion

OBSERVER NEWSPAPERS, INC.

Philip H. Power, Publisher

The Livonia Observer • The Redford Observer
The Westland Observer • The Garden City Observer
The Plymouth Mail & Observer • The Southfield News & Observer
The Farmington Enterprise & Observer



Published by Observer Newspapers, Inc.

271 S. Main Street, P.O. Box 200, Livonia, Mich. 48170

Serving the communities of:
Livonia, Plymouth, Township, Canton Township, Farmington
Farmington Township, Redford Township, Garden City, Westland,
Southfield, Lathrup Village, Franklin, Bingham Farms,
Village of Beverly Hills