



By Philip H. Power  
Publisher

One of the main impressions an American suburban newspaperman takes away with him after a visit to Europe is the new suburbanization of that very old society.

France, Italy, Germany, England -- all are showing many of the familiar characteristics of the American suburban scene. Population growth in single family homes outside big cities; widespread ownership of automobiles; development of expressways and traffic jams; even shopping centers.

The style and details may be different, but the process overall is very familiar to us living in the suburbs.

**DRIVE TO THE EDGE** of a big European city, Tours, in France, for example.

You fight the traffic through the city, and then you come upon a big sign: "Phoenix-Tours, A Planned Community, Model Homes On View."

There are the single-family homes, recently built and in the process of being sold. There are the French families going wide-eyed through the model home. There are the freshly turned piles of dirt, bulldozers, and workmen finishing houses.

The architecture is dull, uniform, and unpleasant. It's much more unpleasant than that in American suburbs, which ought to give European critics of America some pause.

But the people moving out to the suburbs are similar to those in America. They are mostly the white collar workers, almost always with kids, who have decided they want their own piece of land and their own home.

In Europe, where ownership of land is much less a widespread tradition than in America and where that suggests much more in terms of class and status than it does here, this is a remarkable development.

#### OR AUTOMOBILES.

To a degree stunning to my experience in Europe eight years ago, a lot of people have them -- or are in the process of saving money to buy one on time.

They may not be big or expensive -- the most popular car in England, for example, is called the Mini, and is about one third the size of an average Ford or Chevy -- but there are a lot of them.

If a man can't afford even a small car, he is saving his money for a little two-wheeled motor scooter.

The sharp jump in numbers of people owning cars has led to two other familiar aspects of the

**American suburban scene:** Traffic jams in the cities and expressways.

Driving in Paris -- always a sporty proposition -- has now become so crowded that there is very little point in taking a car downtown, even if you can find a place to park. In the older, smaller cities, with narrow streets designed to handle horse-drawn wagons, the traffic situation becomes literally impossible.

**WITH AUTOMOBILES** come two other institutions familiar to Americans in the suburbs: expressways and shopping centers.

European expressways, particularly in Germany, are well designed, well built, and very scary to drive on. This is because many of them have no speed limit at all.

We drove on the Stuttgart-Karlsruhe autobahn (expressway) at 110 miles per hour, thinking that was just as fast as we wanted to go.

Then there was a terrific "whoosh!" on the right hand side of the car. I looked over just in time to see the tail end of a Mercedes disappearing around

the bend, traveling at what must have been 135.

Placed near the expressways are shopping centers -- still rare, but becoming increasingly common.

They do not much feature the food supermarkets so familiar to American shopping centers -- most European housewives still shop every day at little stores near their homes -- but the department stores are there and so are the furniture emporiums.

Clearly, increased prosperity is enabling European families to do without that old, uncomfortable chair that had been in the family for 80 years and to replace it with a new, modern version.

**IF THE SUBURBAN** scene in Europe is strikingly familiar to the American traveler, so are the causes behind the suburban explosion.

People have more money to spend -- much more than they ever had. They can afford a car and gain the mobility it provides.

With a car, they can live away from the city and the apartment they have been chained to for so many years. And with the car, they can get to the shopping

centers to spend their increased income on goods they never before could afford.

The odd thing about the suburbanizing process now going on in Europe is that the politicians and the governments do not seem now much aware that this process is going on.

Like the suburbs in America, European suburbs seem so far to be stepchildren of the main political centers of power. This means that European politics in some years will start going through the same kind of suburb-induced change that is now happening in America.

**EUROPE HAS JUST DISCOVERED IT... AMERICA IS LOOKING FOR THE ANTIDOTE FOR AN OVERDOSE!**



**Tim Richard writes**

## Proper?? Get Proper Answers

When you consider all the screwballs floating around the Congress of the United States, Observerland is pretty lucky to

have the likes of Bill Broomfield, Jack McDonald, Bill Ford and Marv Esch.

I don't care. The next time

they send out one of their survey questionnaires, I'm not going to answer. A guy can get "used" that way.

It's not a matter of political party. Republican and Democratic congressmen alike play games with the results they get from their annual questionnaires.

The name of the game is to word the question in such a way as to get answers that support the congressman's point of view.

The results, he hopes, will be useful in convincing other politicians that this is grass-roots sentiment and convincing the voters that he's in tune with them.

**TAKE THE QUESTION** of the Vietnam war.

Ford, a 15th District Democrat, asked: "A proposal has been made in Congress to require the U.S. government to bring home all U.S. troops from southeast Asia before the end of the year. Do you favor this proposal?"

The "yes" response was favored by 61 per cent. Ford offered them a choice on only a single option. It's natural he would get that kind of response.

Broomfield and McDonald, Republicans from the 18th and 19th Districts, respectively, were fairer on the Vietnam question.

They didn't box their constitu-

ents into a "yes" or "no" position on one question. Rather, they offered the choice of four options: (a) military victory, (b) continued "Vietnamization" of the war with withdrawal of U.S. troops when South Vietnam is capable of defending itself, (c) a set troop withdrawal deadline and (d) immediate withdrawal.

**BEFORE IT** appears that McDonald is a paragon of fairness, let us turn to his question No. 8: "In reference to welfare reform, should the Congress (a) continue the present system (b) reform the system, emphasizing work incentives."

Who in his right mind is going to say he favors the present system? Hardly anyone, from the most conservative Birch to the picketing ADC mom. So what kind of answers did McDonald get? Between 97 and 99 per cent favored the vague "reform" option, whereupon McDonald says:

"I am supporting H.R. 1, the Welfare Reform Bill which offers job training and work incentives, and discourages the splitting of families in order to qualify for aid

... Ah, there's nothing as comforting as writing a bill that satisfies 97 to 99 per cent of your district.

## Should Volunteers Clean Up Rouge?

By W. W. Edgar  
Over this coming weekend more than 3,000 volunteers are expected to take part in the annual "Rescue The Rouge" program along the main branch.

When the sun sinks Sunday evening they will have taken tons of debris out of the main branch from Eight-Mile Road to Telegraph Road -- with token help from the county in the way of providing heavy equipment.

A month later the Jaycees will wage their annual war on pollution by attempting to clean the middle branch from Northville to Dearborn. The Jaycees, no doubt, will do a good job. They always do.

But, without taking one iota of credit away from them, the

time has come when the powers that be in city, state, county and even federal government no longer should depend upon volunteers to do a job that so badly needs to be done.

There is no doubt that the Rouge -- and its branches -- is a dirty river. From its very source at Walled Lake until it reaches the Detroit River is a sorry sight -- and a health hazard.

**THOSE IN THE KNOW** claim that the only remedy for the lakes is to dredge them to add about six feet to their depth. These same sources claim that job would entail an expenditure of one half million dollars.

Is this a job for exclusive use of volunteer help?

But at a time when the ecology movement is sweeping the country and we are being urged to improve our environment the job should be given to professionals on a full time basis.

**R.T. Thompson writes**

## Can Happen Here -- And Did

The old belief that it can't happen here has been proven false again and the details are sad ... it cost the life of a Livonia youth who apparently just didn't care to follow warnings signs.

Newburgh Lake, which isn't exactly the best spot in the area to swim in, has signs posted in numerous places warning that no swimming is permitted. The signs should be enough and should keep all swimmers out of the lake.

**POLICE DEPARTMENTS** of the communities in which the

lake is located and the Wayne County Sheriff's patrol have routed away many swimmers during the summer, especially on hot, humid days.

Unfortunately, the police officers and deputies can only order the swimmers out of the water ... there isn't any violation of a law as grounds for an arrest.

So, the result is that swimmers have been using the lake; they have been taking chances on running into underwater obstructions, trees covered by water, and

even diving in places where it is known there is danger.

One asks: Does it have to cost a life before persons will stop diving into and swimming in a condemned lake?

We haven't seen any swimmers or divers since the fatal accident, but that doesn't mean that it isn't so.

**THE ONLY ANSWER** is that lawmakers should put some bite in laws that will give the police officers more authority ... the sooner the better.

We realize that little can be

## Mobile Homes Answer?

By Marie McGee

Image-conscious Americans are going to have to take another look at trailer parks and the type of people who live in them.

The view from Mortgage Row can be very enlightening.

In fact, better look again. That could be your snow-haired Mom and your retiree Dad in that salesroom right now making a deal for a mobile home.

More and more are doing it everyday. And why not? In most cases, it works out rather well for all concerned.

**WE'VE GOT TO** face up to the fact that besides being one of the fastest growing (and profitable) businesses in the country today, the mobile home, for many, is the answer to the low-cost housing problem.

It's the only real moderately priced housing available to most people and particularly the older.

Many townhouses and condominiums are still too big an investment for the average pensioner. And most apartments have priced themselves right out of the market for seniors living on a fixed income.

Why shouldn't budget conscious Americans -- young and old -- take a good look at these mobile homes? They're not only convenient, they're beautiful.

From the retirees' point of view, they offer a life of dignity as well as peace and quiet at a price they can afford.

That's an important item if you've owned your own home all your married days and dread the paper-thin walls most apartments seem to have.

**A MOBILE HOME** development can also be a boon to a community's tax base as Canton Township is learning.

One of the nicest "residential" areas is Royal Holiday Park in the northeast corner of the township. Besides being extremely well-kept up by its residents (many are senior citizens), the development paid approximately \$27,000 in taxes to the Plymouth School District last year while adding only something like seven children to the school rolls.

In comparison, nearby Holiday Park subdivision added well over 1,000 youngsters to the school system.

Properly run, a mobile park can be a valuable asset to a community. We also realize there's still a lot to be done in the way of laws to protect the trailer owners from unscrupulous park owners. The legislature is just beginning to wake up to this fact.

As for upkeep: Well, we all know of residential subdivisions that have become run down and neglected.

The time has come for all of us to take an updated "view" of mobile home developments. It might even change the "point" of our argument.

## Editorial & Opinion

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