

Tim Richard writes

Schoolcraft Lacks Cultural Interest

We have a trillion dollar economy, magnificent shopping centers and about 50,000 more automobiles than we really need. And yet the 10-year-old Schoolcraft College, which logically should be the cultural center of the northwestern suburbs, still has only the most rudimentary facilities for the fine arts and only dim prospects of improving the situation soon.

Interviewing the 17 board candidates prior to the Sept. 13 election, it was distressing to find that only one, Leroy Bennett, had any strong commitment to the proposed fine arts complex. The other 16 reflected the thinking of the outgoing trustees in lowering the priority of the arts center.

The voters themselves showed limited foresight by rejecting millage that would have made an arts center (among many other things) possible.

Perhaps the college establishment was to blame because of its lackluster campaign for the millage; perhaps the voters were to blame because they consciously decided they'd rather use that money to buy transistors for their teenagers and let them rot their brains out with CKLW and WKNR.

THIS OBSERVER suspects that the college establishment's lack of enthusiasm about the project was a factor in Wayne Dunlap's decision to leave the post of director of fine arts, in an area to which he was deeply attached, and head for the greener pastures of Grand Valley State College, where they have just opened such a complex.

Dunlap's loss is a serious one. Here was a master programmer, a tremendous recruiter who lived in excellent faculty members who are educators and thinkers as well as craftsmen; an organizer who could bring in amazing guest talents at bargain prices.

(Dunlap, incidentally, will commute to conduct the Plymouth Symphony, but one seriously wonders how many years he can keep that up and whether he will

be able to give it the same kind of leadership from 140 miles away. But that's another matter.)

HAPPILY, Dunlap's successor, Richard Saunders, is committed to "a closer cooperation with the community," according to Amusements Editor Betty Masson's feature story. That's good, because Schoolcraft College ought to be something more important than a place to "train" young people for utilitarian jobs. It ought to be a cultural center for these suburbs.

"Culture" is a social function traditionally assigned to the central cities, to be financed by rich folks. That can't continue much longer.

For one thing, there is a flight of talent out of Detroit, and that's a fact of life whether we like it or not. For another, there just aren't that many people with money, to burn. If, for example, the Detroit Symphony had to be staffed by only Detroit residents, to depend on Detroiters for its

audiences and funds, it would go bust in a week or less.

Besides, it's a long drive to Ford Auditorium, the Fisher or the Hilberry.

IN AN EXCELLENT and eye-opening article in these newspapers a couple of years ago, Sue Shaughnessy pointed out that the community colleges are becoming cultural centers because they have the talent, the potential facilities and the potential resources to do the job. She wasn't knocking the volunteer groups, just trying to tell people the truth.

In a post-election interview, Schoolcraft President C. Nelson Grote said he wanted to try again for the building program for the college's next 10 years. The board should listen to him.

The board should also listen to trustee-elect Bennett on the importance of the fine arts complex. People don't live by voc-tech alone.



R.T. Thompson writes

Radar Makes 'Sitting Ducks' Of Motorists

In the outdoor sports world, that of the small and large game hunter and the fisherman, there is quite a phobia against what is known as "sitting ducks" targets.

To the sportsman, this means you always give the animal a chance and make a real challenge of hunting and downing the game. Most hunters take a very dim view of the gunner who drives along a country lane and takes pot shots at a "sitting duck."

It's an unwritten code of sportsmanship that most all follow. We particularly say "most" since there are some who

have no scruples about the manner in which they get their small and large game.

APPARENTLY THAT same code of sportsmanship hasn't struck some members of the Redford Township police department who are taking advantage of their new toy—a radar system—to make things miserable for motorists driving along the much maligned Schoolcraft Road and Telegraph highway.

In fact, the radar system has made "sitting ducks" of numerous drivers in the past five or six weeks. A radar car is placed

alongside the road, with lights out, suddenly charges into Telegraph to nab an unsuspecting motorist.

The sad part of the system is that drivers can be moving along Telegraph in a 50-mile zone and then suddenly hit that part where the road winds and curves because of work on the new freeway where the limit is only 35 mph. Before the driver is aware of the change in the zone, he finds himself being stopped by a radar car and told he has exceeded the speed limit.

The situation is even worse on Schoolcraft where the speed limit

between Inkster and Beech Roads is 40 mph eastbound where the road curves and winds to the point where one would have trouble even going at the limit.

Then between Beech and Telegraph, where the new highway is absolutely straight, the speed limit suddenly drops to 35 mph, and that's where the radar car is making most of its arrests.

Just as a contrast, drivers going westbound find the posted speed limit 40 mph where the road again is straight as a string from Telegraph to Beech and winds from Beech to Inkster.

TO ADD TO the confusion, those driving west can view a sign on the eastbound lane that indicates the speed limit is 45 mph.

It's high time that Redford Township officials become consistent in the posting of signs and high time that steps be taken to halt the "sitting duck" arrests.

Perhaps the township needs revenue and perhaps this is one way of getting it in a hurry...but it isn't building up any good will with township residents or those passing through the area over roads that aren't too good, to say the least.

Leonard Poger writes

Why Does It Take So Long In School Talks?

Sense And Nonsense

The What-Will-They-Think-Of-Next Dept.: Coffee squeezed from a tube?

For a class project, Michigan State University packaging students have developed an aluminum tube capable of storing jellyfish for use by campers.

Or people who just like to brush their teeth with their breakfast maybe.

A common sequence of events during contract negotiations with governmental agencies—particularly school districts—is the opening of bargaining sessions, several months of efforts, tentative settlement on a new contract with salary raises, and formal ratification.

Local school boards usually

have their own school administrators handle the nitty-gritty of contract negotiations with the teachers' union and the board giving general direction on how much money is in the kitty.

ANOTHER SEQUENCE to the contract talks and eventual settlement usually happens many months later and is usually ignored by the general public which picks up the financial tab.

That event concerns the school board acting on salary

raises and improvements in fringe benefits to school administrators who are not in the teachers' union.

In most cases, the justification for raising the salary of administrators is that the teachers received a raise and it's bad for morale if the teachers' superiors don't get at least the same amount of pay raise.

SOMEHOW WE GET the feeling school administrators "trying to hold the line" on teachers' salary demands aren't

too upset about the faculty union getting a whopping pay raise (or any pay raise at all) since it makes it much easier for those same administrators to justify their own pay hikes before the school board.

This shouldn't be construed to mean that school board negotiators simply "lie down and play dead" while opening the school district's treasury to the teachers' union.

BUT NO MATTER how

worthy the men negotiating for the school board, there must be a better way of doing things.

School boards should take the lead from city officials who usually hire an outside labor negotiator to handle contract talks with employee unions.

The money involved in school administrative pay raises isn't enough to cut any local tax rates but the principle—or should it be the principal—should be reviewed for possible change.

Editorial & Opinion

OBSERVER NEWSPAPERS, INC.

Philip H. Power, Publisher
The Livonia Observer - The Redford Observer
The Westland Observer - The Grosse Pointe Observer
The Plymouth Mail & Observer - The Southfield News & Observer
The Farmington Enterprise & Observer



Published by Observer Newspapers, Inc.
36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, Mich. 48150

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

Time To Put Supply Where There's Demand

By MARGARET MILLER

A few weeks back we printed a story about a new business in this area—a maid service to deliver domestic help from the inner city to the door of suburban homes.

It is a commendable service, full of good old American enterprise and hard work, and it fills a real need of suburban women.

But the fact that it is needed and can operate profitably is in itself a symptom of something gravely wrong with Observerland suburbs and others.

LOOKING AT the matter

honestly, it makes no more sense to import domestic help than it does to have thousands of workers drive across the metropolitan area to work in the factories in our area.

Both logistical absurdities are made necessary by an attitude that, while not universal in suburbia, is held by enough residents to set the pattern for the rest.

That way of thinking runs something like this:

"We moved to the suburbs to find a peaceful, rural atmosphere. Such an atmosphere can be preserved only by subdivisions full of large, expensive houses set on spacious lots.

"People who live in such houses usually have two cars, so there's no need for public transportation. And that's really no problem as long as there are maid-services to bring in domestics and workers willing to drive many miles to keep in operation the factories that lower tax bases."

THE PROBLEM is that this attitude—and the zoning laws it engenders—do more than keep out possible domestic employees and factory workers from bringing their contributions to live in Observerland.

By denying the possibility for good and inexpensive hous-

ing, it also excludes the young married of limited means, the singles who might like to live as well as work here, the senior citizens on low and fixed pensions.

The problem isn't even particularly a racial one, though many domestics and factory workers happen to be black. Recent studies have shown blacks losing what interest they may have had in living in the suburbs.

It's simply a matter of putting the supply where you find the demand—and considering the possibility that a mixture of more kinds of people might make living here not only easier but more interesting.