

By Philip H. Power  
Publisher

## OBSERVATION POINT

# Thanksgiving: Images Out Of The Past, Realities Of The Present

As geese migrating south in the fall, our minds around Thanksgiving time instinctively fly back into our past.

Grandmother's house, standing primly white in the fresh snow, a spruce tree greenly etched in the front yard. The black iron wood stove in the kitchen, warm and brimming with the good smells of turkey and mince pie. The old cut glass, hauled out of the corner cupboard, set on the big embroidered linen tablecloth. Grandfather steeling the big carving knife to razor sharpness.

All of us have these images in the attic of our memory, some of them out of our own personal past experience and others coming to us out of the collective pioneer farming history of our nation.

And at this Thanksgiving season of 1972 here in the suburbs, with miles and miles of expressway under construction and row upon row of new houses going up in the subdivisions, these images of the past seem both strangely out of tune with today's reality and wistfully familiar, comfortable and warm.

For the past they evoke compared to the present we know is somehow more human and less sterile, more scaled to a personal proportion and less to an efficiently run assembly line civilization.

**TWO NEWS** stories over the past few weeks brought these reflections home to me in a very real way.

The first concerned the death of a genuine pioneer in Oakland County, Arthur Lamb, who died in Farmington at the age of 91. Married for 67 years, Mr. Lamb and his wife, Rena, lived in Farmington when Grand River was a wood plank road and the trees were big and thick across the farms. A carpenter by trade, Mr. Lamb served on the Oakland County board of supervisors for 16 years and as mayor of Farmington from 1929 to 1933.

He was a tall, gentle man, much concerned with his friends and reflective of his past. I think he sensed the jarring contrast between his images of the past and the reality of his present.

Some years ago, we left a meeting of the Farmington Exchange Club together and looked down Grand River toward the center of town. The new city hall was across the way and the cars hummed busily up and down the big, paved street. "I dunno," he said reflectively, "maybe we've got a little too big for our britches."

At this Thanksgiving time, I like to remember a man like Arthur Lamb.

**I ALSO LIKE** to think about my friends, Frederick and Clayton Koch, who ran the Koch sausage shop on Ann Arbor Road in Plymouth Township.

The shop was warm and clean, with neat pine paneling on the walls and the good, earthy smell of home cured bacon and ham and freshly stuffed sausage. If you stood at the clean oak counter, you could look through the door back into the work room and see the surgically clean stainless steel slicers and grinders they used to make their sausage.

Prepackaged in cellophane it

wasn't, and if you asked the Kochs what was good that day, they'd give you the straight answer instead of telling you any old thing just to make a sale.

It was a shop run to human scale. When your wife needed the knives sharpened, you could bring them in and turn them over to Clayton for honing. He'd have them ready the next day without thinking about a bill, and you'd drop by to pick them up and have a chat about what was transpiring in town.

Well, a couple of weeks ago, the Kochs sold their corner lot and went out of business. They decided not to sell their famous sausage recipe to anyone, because they felt their high standards wouldn't be followed.

Across the street is a big shopping center, with a big plastic sign and a spacious asphalt parking lot.

This Thanksgiving -- and at others in the future -- I'll think about the Kochs and their shop and Arthur Lamb and pioneers like him, and feel thankful.

And a little bit wistful, too.

SOMETHING WE'RE NOT  
PRODUCING ANYMORE



## The Undiscussed Economic Issue: Quality Of Work

By W.W. EDGAR

Few people in high places are talking about it publicly, but underneath all of the prognostications for the next four years lies one of the gravest problems the country ever has faced.

It has to do with the nation's economy that can be traced back to the loss of the pride in workmanship for which America once was noted, the slumping of American productivity, and the loss of prestige in the market places of the world.

There was a time when the other nations of the globe looked to America for leadership. It was called the American "know-how" -- and they thrilled at the productive capacity of the United States.

**THIS CAME TO** light in World War II when the United States became the "Arsenal of Democracy" and the defense plants fed the allies most of the war equipment -- and on time.

Even away from the war, America set a pace that flabbergasted the rest of the world. There was the time when the Rolls Royce motors were considered the best in the world -- but didn't get top rating for the war effort because it took the greater part of a week for England to turn out a finished product.

"Send us the blueprints," said officials at Packard Motor Co. in Detroit, "and we'll make them." It is history now that Packard received the blueprints, and after a month they were turning out 30 Rolls Royce motors a day -- to the great astonishment of the British manufacturers.

**AMERICA'S** slump in the world market was brought out into the open a week ago by Ned Stirtion, of Plymouth, a vice-president of the Detroit Tooling Assn. who recently returned from Japan.

"Until America regains its pride -- the pride of accomplishment and the ability to turn out a superior product and the workers are considered humans instead of numbers -- we are due to take a big drop in the market places of the world," he said.

He pointed out that the Swiss have taken over the watch making and clock industry of the globe -- that Japan has cornered the TV and radio markets with a fine product and now has made

another dent in the market place with the Toyota automobile.

"The Japanese now have exports in large numbers to five countries," he went on, "and the market is increasing. This can be a blow to America as we manufacture more automobiles than we need and our economy will suffer greatly without exports. The loss of a large portion of the auto market will cause another dip in out balance of payments and cause the economy to dip.

**WHAT HAS HAPPENED** to American pride?

No one can point a finger on the exact reason -- but the assembly lines can take a lot of the blame. The worker used to take pride in his work when he, alone, took a piece of metal and turned out the finished product. Now, no one worker can be credited -- it is everybody's job and the assembly line pace is so fast that, with the wink of an eye, a part can be missed and the product becomes inferior.

American prestige in the market place isn't helped when the word is spread that the major motor companies are recalling cars by the thousands, yes millions, to correct flaws in workmanship.

You don't hear of the Japanese recalling their models.

The worker's attitude also has changed, and this is a major part of the problem.

There was a time long ago when the writer was employed at the Atlas Portland Cement Co. in eastern Pennsylvania. When employees were asked where they worked, it was customary to answer, "The Atlas Portland Cement Co. -- the largest in the world."

There was pride in the answer. Now, when you ask the workers back home where they are employed, they answer, "Up at the cement plant."

The pride in their work and in their company has gone.

**THIS LOSS** has worked its way through the entire manufacturing process until American productivity and workmanship no longer dominate the world market places.

Regaining this pride is the major problem that must be solved if America is to maintain its place as a world leader -- in peace as well as in war.

### The Richards-Winick

## Mary Vs. Rosina: Gr-r-r-r!

Bullfighting has never gone over in the United States, and bear baiting has long been outlawed. But if you enjoy a good old-fashioned bare-fanged, snarling battle, you ought to see the ladies on the Schoolcraft College board go at it.

Mary Dumas and Rosina Raymond had labored long and hard in the political vineyards of their opposing parties, but about a year ago, fate played a practical joke and got them both elected to the college board. If they had used rapier and poison instead of words, the board room would look like the stage in the concluding scene of "Hamlet."

**MRS. DUMAS** was recently elected as a Republican to the Wayne County Commission, which made her happy enough, and the fact that she whopped Rosina's son Eldon made her positively gloat, the Raymond family being in Livonia politics approximately what the Kennedys are in Massachusetts and the Longs in Louisiana.

Mrs. Dumas, as my peers at the Northville Record so aptly put it, is "her own worst enemy" and has let it be known that she will hang onto the college job in

addition to serving on the County Commission. She has some research from the State Senate saying those positions are not in conflict and may be held simultaneously. Good ol' Mary. Common sense be damned.

While running for the county job, Mrs. Dumas issued some literature describing her college trustee's job, and if you didn't know better, you'd have thought she ran the whole institution on Haggerty Road herself, without any help from 200 or so other people. Naturally, Mrs. Raymond and some of the other trustees saw red and came within a single vote of bouncing out Mrs. Dumas as board secretary and alternate SEMCOG delegate.

**MRS. RAYMOND**, for her part, has come up with some choice comments that have been quoted in news stories and deserve to be re-quoted on this sheet of more or less intelligent opinion.

Of Mrs. Dumas' and Dr. Robert Geake's successful bids to other offices Nov. 7, Mrs. Raymond said: "I'm a little tired of this stepping-stone business," as if it were somehow un-American not to run for higher office. No offense intended to School-

craft College, but I never figured its board should be the ultimate jewel in anyone's political crown.

Mrs. Raymond also objected to voting on the appointment of an auditor and a law firm with this rationale: "I don't want one or two people voting on who we (the board members who didn't get elected to higher office yet) are going to have to work with." Really. That's what the lady said.

**WE WILL HAVE** further treats in store for us in January when

## Election Could Be A School Holiday

By MARIE MCGEE

The presidential election has come and gone and the small annoyances of the day have faded. Except for one.

School boards throughout Observerland would do well to dismiss school at the elementary-junior high level on election day. The action would eliminate some extremely hazardous traffic conditions and at the same time do away with a lot of unneeded commotion caused by children trying to get to and from school while motorists jam every available inch of open space around school sites in an attempt to get as close as possible to the polling places.

School parking lots are turned into obstacle courses as children scamper in and around vehicles parked at all angles. Many cars are parked illegally (as one law-abiding third grader we observed attempted to tell a woman whose car was blocking the crosswalk).

**THEN WHEN YOU** have a murky, rainy day like we had this year, it's twice as bad. Granted, school was only in session a half-day, but that was bad enough. Visibility was near zero when school was dismissed at noon, and youngsters tore out of the buildings oblivious to the weather and the drivers who were hell-bent for the election polls.

The situation at some Livonia schools, for instance, bordered on the chaotic as mothers added to the confusion by attempting to pick up their youngsters by car because of the inclement weather.

Imagine what it was like when the school bus arrived.

Fortunately, there weren't any serious mishaps reported.

Long lines of chattering people strung out along the school corridors are hardly conducive to learning. Rather, a festive air seems to predominate -- so why not make it a holiday?

Think about it, board members. You've got four years to make up your minds.

### Sense And Nonsense

Handouts from the mail that we never finished reading:

"DETROIT--Betsy Ann Plank, newly elected chairman for 1973 of the Public Relations Society of America, today called upon American and Canadian public relations people to adopt a new and progressive outlook on the future of their profession..."

## Editorial & Opinion

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