

OBSERVATION POINT

Real Estate Ads Show Trend In Population Shifts

In today's society, you catch the first faint stirrings of change not in radical political groups or scholarly publications, but from ads or in bars or shopping center concourses.

The following come from a selection of the past weekend ads:

"Wooded, scenic surroundings..."

"Kid country is in West Bloomfield... where youngsters roam the wide open spaces, breathe fresh country air, play in parks and lakes..."

"Condominiums adjacent to the natural beauty of W.P. Holiday Nature Preserve... a country setting with all the urban conveniences."

"Ideally situated on a rolling site of unspoiled natural beauty..."

THERE'S MORE here than just a bunch of home and condominium developers pitching hard for their product, to a suburban audience.

What's interesting is the particular emotional appeal selected for the pitch: nature; open spaces; small size; fresh air; country; woods.

Compare this with what the developers were pushing three, five, eight years ago. Then it was convenience, easy terms, the luxury of a separate house, the neighborliness of the folks in the subdivision, the attractions of suburban living with shopping centers so near by.

There's still some of the "country life with urban conveniences" line in the ads today, but what is striking about them is the emphasis on the country, on the small size of the development, on the air of rural peace and security and wholesomeness.

The ideal suggested by these ads is a group of not much more than 200 homes, gently settled away from everything else in the middle of rolling country tracts and woods, with small local stores run by friendly local people, where everybody knows everybody else and where if your kid gets lost any passer-by knows who he is and will bring him home, riding on his shoulder.

This, in case you hadn't recognized it, is a somewhat sugared-up description of a classical English village. It's also what the ad men who design the real estate ads these days seem to think will sell.

And that suggests a whole lot about what's happening in our society.

IN TWENTIETH CENTURY American history, we have seen two gigantic population movements in the last 50 years, each of which has taken the nature of the country and shaken it by the neck.

The first, which took place from the time of the depression to just after World War II, was the movement of people from the farms to the big cities. It involved all told perhaps 60,000,000 people over a decade; it built the cities to metropolises; it fueled the industrial engine that won the war; it created the sprawling slums.

It created the second population movement, from the cities to the suburbs, which started just after the war when cars and roads became generally available, and it is still going on.

Before it is over, it will involve perhaps just as many people as the movement from the farms to the cities. It built the suburbs into what they are today: the largest single chunk of our population; the biggest block of economic resource; miles upon miles

of homes and apartments surrounding shopping centers.

BUT IF YOU read the real estate ads, it didn't do enough.

It provided good schools, but now teachers strike in the suburbs just as willingly as in Detroit. It provided a sense of security and peace, but the dope trade has pushed into the suburbs and the single most rapidly increasing crime in our country is suburban burglaries.

It provided human-scale neighborhoods and subdivisions, but the suburbs grew so fast that the promise of a face to face society evaporated in the mass homogenization of the vast shopping center.

Unless I miss my guess, what the real estate ads are suggesting is the tip of the next big population movement in our country: from the suburbs to essentially rural villages.

Just how fast this will happen or how soon I do not know. But it will have consequences equally as great as the two previous movements, and it is only wise to begin thinking about that right now.

The Redford writes

Young Drivers Getting A Bum Rap

Last week in this space, I gave the state and some of our local police a bad time for the dishonest drunk driving statistics they have been issuing about our 18-20 year olds.

Despite squawks from some of the men in blue, I see no reason to back down on my contentions that (1) figures involving "drinking" drivers are worthless because alcohol isn't purporting to be a factor in the accident, and (2) arrest figures for 1972 and '73 can't be compared to 1971's because, at almost the same time the 18-year Age of Majority law went into effect, the state lowered the definition of drunk driving.

Instead, more evidence has come in indicating the young drivers are being hit with a bum rap on drinking. It comes from Bruce D. Bowen of the University of Michigan and Michael R. Kagay of Princeton.

They made a report to the White House Conference on Youth on the impact of the lowered age of majority

on drinking and driving. They are quoted in a newsletter by Traffic Safety for Michigan, a privately financed outfit based in Lansing.

The average 18-20 year old, they estimate, drank about one six-pack of beer per weekend and one bottle of liquor more a month after the age of majority was lowered in Michigan and Vermont, the only states with adequate data. Other findings:

- Possibly "young drivers need not have as much to drink as older drivers in order to attract the attention of the police."
- Young drivers "were convicted with significantly lower blood alcohol content levels than were older drivers."
- (Comment: It could be that young drivers "can't handle their liquor" as well as older drivers, but it could also be that the police are just looking harder for younger drinking drivers. Probably both.)
- Young drivers are less likely to

be drinking drivers. "Even though 18-20 year olds represent 11 per cent of the intoxicated drivers, they are 20 per cent of all night time drivers."

On the other hand, the 25-34 age group accounts for 27 per cent of all drivers but a whopping 41 per cent of all legally drunk drivers (blood alcohol content at least 0.10 per cent).

• Young drivers who commit offenses while legally drunk are far from a disproportionate part of the population. "In fact, Michigan 18-20 year olds represent 8.8 per cent of the licensed drivers and merely a proportionate number (8.6 per cent) of those arrested."

(Comment: The figures are for arrests only; I have yet to see any figures on convictions. Isn't that interesting? There's a vast difference between arresting a young driver and getting him convicted in court.)

• "State police in both Michigan and Vermont stated that enforcement of the law on 18-20 year olds was

TO OUR GUYS AND GALS



WHO DELIVER OUR SHOW, WE SALUTE YOU ON INTERNATIONAL NEWSPAPER CARRIER DAY OCTOBER 13

The Thompson writes

We Salute Our Carrier Boys And Girls

Today, the Observer Newspapers group salutes and pays tribute to a worthy and special group of young business youngsters who are engaged in establishing a good record in their first business venture, that of serving as a newspaper carrier. Saturday has been designated the national newspaper carrier day.

Your newspaper carrier, whether a boy or girl, is a remarkable youngster, ranging in age from 12 to the late teens. He or she - there are as many girls delivering newspapers as boys - is learning by actual experience the lessons of thrift, honesty, courtesy and the worthwhile rewards of faithful performances of duty.

Whether it is a day with the sun shining, or one with rain pouring down, ice on the

streets and sidewalks or covered with snow, these youngsters do everything possible to deliver the Observers.

Sure, there are times when the paper arrives late but you can wager this is due to production problems at the plant and have nothing to do with the normal delivery habits of the carrier.

They know folks want the twice-weekly products of the Observer family and that it is their responsibility to make deliveries as quickly as possible.

They have a great deal of loyalty for the newspaper and to their customers. That's why you so often will see our carrier boys and girls hustling along in late afternoon on Wednesday and Fridays making stops at each home. They take pride in their work and want read-

ers to have the newspapers in hand as quickly as possible.

We can well remember the days back in Ohio when we were delivering newspapers at the age of eight. It didn't make any difference what the weather was, we wanted to have the papers in the hands of readers as early as possible. In those days, we had to cover as many as five or six miles from the first customer to the last, but there wasn't any complaining; we had a job to do and we did it.

The carrier boys and girls today don't have as far to walk, but they have that same determination, and they have a "well done" feeling when the last paper is delivered.

They are capable representatives of a team of more than a million newspaper carriers in the United States and Canada. One will find these young people have bank accounts, savings for future education needs, paying a goodly portion of their expenses in connection with daily living. Many of them, with justifiable pride, provide little luxuries for the family such as household appliances, furniture and such.

Since the days of Ben Franklin, America's first recognized carrier boy, the opportunity for enterprising young people as carriers has developed to the point where it is an integral part of our American way of life.

In the role of newspaper carriers, they have been afforded an opportunity to learn first hand how to develop abilities as a salesman, to meet the public, and how to get along with their fellow carriers.

Occasionally they suffer a setback or a disappointment in their first business venture which serves as a lesson for the future. These setbacks teach that one has to be alert in these competitive times, and each mistake can be a costly one in prestige or even monetarily.

Truly, your newspaper carrier is a youngster who takes responsibilities seriously and who will in later years take a place among the business and professional leaders of tomorrow.

One need only check the rosters of today's business leaders to learn many attributes of a great part of their success to the fact that they were at one time one of those young business people known as newspaper carriers, lending credence to the slogan, "Today's newspaper carrier will be tomorrow's leaders."

The campaign arguments

Leonard Poger writes

Tax Reform Dead Issue

Property tax reform was formally pronounced dead and buried last month when Detroit voters approved a proposal to have a property tax millage instead of a personal income tax levy for school operations.

The millage victory in Detroit and its related election campaign made it clear that it will be tough - if not outright impossible - for suburban schools to promote property tax reform in the near future, if ever.

The campaign arguments for property tax reform were a flip-flop argument of what school officials in Detroit and its suburbs were arguing for many years.

But there was a new twist to the campaign which appealed to the voters' emotions.

In the Detroit campaign, a citizens' committee stressed the point that with a property tax levy, local industry and business pay the lion's share of the tax.

With an income tax levy, individuals pay the burden for school operations.

But the argument left untouched the age-old problem of how to fairly provide financial support for public institutions.

There is no doubt that the typical homeowner with a \$25,000 house and a \$10,000 salary in Detroit felt he was "sticking it" to the business community to approving a property tax levy and dropping the burdensome income tax.

But the problem still remains: how large suburban districts with little business or industrial plants to help pay the tax load can continue to finance budgets which have been growing faster than the national inflation factor.

The Wayne-Westland school district continues to have the highest millage rate in the state. The board was forced, for a number of unrelated reasons, to boost the millage rate this year while neighboring districts were actually cutting their own rates.

The district is primarily made up of residential subdivisions with the only major taxpayers being Westland Shopping Center and the Ford Motor Co. assembly plant in Wayne.

Suburban school officials have been trying for more than a decade to reform the school financing system.

But voters have indicated in the Detroit election and the statewide proposal last fall that high and unfair property tax levies will be with us for a while yet.

Editorial & Opinion

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Who Presents Children's Rights?

READERS' FORUM

Please type (or write clearly) and limit letters to 300 words.

- Letters must be signed, with the writer's address. Names will be withheld only at the writer's request and for good cause.
- The editor reserves the right to reject unsuitable letters.

anxious of the production worker's pay, but how about the personal satisfaction and enjoyment I receive from my work far outweighs the money.

If that man on the production line can tolerate his job, he deserves the pay. I would far rather see him there than in the welfare line.

The nursing profession has many problems and grie-

But in contrast, the nurse works a full eight hours in comparison to a teacher's six hours. The nurse also works 12 months a year, with many holidays and weekends included.

Mr. Yack seems very en-

M.A. WYNNE
Livonia