

The Challenger

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*In this issue we
challenge the
suburbs...*

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The History of What We Now Call Life

Jennifer Bynes

It is an eerie truth that our every-day behaviors, such as going to the Jewel, attending classes at Harper College, or flying out of O'Hare did not even exist 100 years ago – the idea may have been evolving, but the actual locations at which we practice our daily routine were nothing more than a possible idea in dirt. It really wasn't until the 1960s that the suburban population expanded.

It was in fact Chicagoans who coined the term, "The Burbs." A suburb, as all who reside in the questionably grand northwest suburbs know, is a residential area outlying a city. Suburbs have been around since at least the 6th century B.C. Beginning in ancient Greece, the suburbs were a haven outside of the populace city for the wealthy. In the 20th century, suburban

life became prevalent alongside the mass production of the automobile.

In a short amount of time, big things happened for Chicagoland. The term "Chicagoland" was actually created by reporter James O'Donnell Bennett of the *Chicago Tribune*. On July 27, 1926, Mr. Bennett headlined the paper, "Chicagoland's Shrines: A Tour of Discoveries." Since Bennett's article, Chicago and its surrounding suburbs have come to be known as "Chicagoland." The suburbs of Chicago are categorized by the township's name; there are the Barringtons, the Groves, the Forests, the Heights, the Woods, the Lakes, and the Parks. While some are unable to be classified, some names capture two of the categorized labels.

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The Suburban Culture Theorem

Brandon Czajka

"Are we there yet?" is indisputably the anthem of rural areas, while "What should we do next?" is that of urban regions. Suburbanites, however, are left in the gray area, often contemplating questions such as "What do you want to do?" or "Where do you want to go?" Our area has its pros and cons: Our public education system is high quality. Our air is cleaner compared to the stench of toxic dumps and cow manure (although the newly-placed fertilizer outside Building Z at Harper College is appalling). Most of us need never fear high-rise fires or cow tipping casualties. Despite these benefits, the average adolescent trapped in the northwest suburbs is still left perpetually ques-

tioning, "Is there really anything to do out here?"

The northwest suburbs certainly contain an abundance of activities and places such as multiplex cinemas, fantastic shopping, and great music halls that all allow groups of teens to come together and have a good time. Despite the array of great hangouts, many aspects of our lives still demonstrate that the suburbs . . . well . . . they flat out suck. Rural areas have square-dances, cow tipplings, transistor radios, and urban areas have cutting-edge culture. What does suburbia have? Most of us know that downtown Chicago has everything that suburbia has to offer and then some. With such a tantalizing city in our midst, most ado-

lescents escape to enjoy the thrills city life has to offer, leaving suburbia behind. Like my fellow comrades, I too flee the suburbs on the weekends. However, I thought it would be intriguing to embark on a mission to determine if a distinct culture, along with activities independent from urban and rural regions, actually exists for younger generations in the suburbs.

Woodfield Mall is one location in the northwest suburbs where everyone has spent some time. As nearly everyone knows, shopping centers and malls seem to be primarily a suburban phe-

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Schaumburg, in particular, is difficult to classify because its history is vastly different from other northwest suburbs. Records state that Joshua Sunderlage, a German-born surveyor who helped divided Cook County into townships around 1833, was the earliest to reside in the area. Legend claims it was then occupied in the mid-1830s by a New Yorker, Trumbull Kent. As other "Yankee" settlers made the journey to this new locale, German settlers also traveled to the area – asserting their influence on the region, which explains sometimes hard to pronounce German street names such as "Biesterfeld. Many of the German farmers traveled from Schaumburg-Lippe, Germany. "Schaumburg" was the name given for just that reason. The original, unofficial name was Sarah's Grove, derived from three women, Sarah Frisbe, Sarah Smith, and Sarah McChesney,

who lived close to a grove that cut through the area. Its official name at the time was Township 41. Members of the community considered Lutherville or Luthersburg, until deciding upon Schaumburg. They quickly organized a congregation, leading to the building of the first church in 1847 on the corner of Schaumburg Road and Roselle Road.

In 1900, Schaumburg celebrated itself as a "model community for Cook and surrounding counties." In fact, Schaumburg never even had a jail. Until the 1950s, it continued as a farming community. In Schaumburg, the residents began to industrialize extensively, but, unlike newly cultivated suburbs, Schaumburg was not built around a railroad depot. Thus, growth was slow due to the lack of communication with Chicago. Many German settlers resided along the Chicago-Elgin Road, or what is now known as Irving Park Road, because the Northwest Tollway, I-90, which

ended isolation for Schaumburg, was not constructed until 1956, over a hundred years after German settlers had arrived. That same year, the Village of Schaumburg was incorporated. Quickly after, roadways and industry really blossomed. By 1980 most of all the land was built up. As of August 18, 2007, Schaumburg's development will have its own exhibit at the Chicago History Museum – making it the first suburb to have its own display.

In September 1959, Hoffman Estates was incorporated. Mary Gannon, a 47 year resident of Hoffman Estates, recalls her move to Hoffman Estates from the city being difficult because of the lack of public transportation. "If you didn't have a car you were out of luck," she said, joking "I never planned on being a pioneer." It was after the construction of the highway that the Village of Hoffman Estates appropriated the land north of Schaumburg in

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nomenon. Woodfield Mall is arranged under a roof spanning an expansive area, so you won't be exposed to the elements, the way you would on a "Main Street." The indoor mall also provides a year round "hangout" for juveniles. Scott Moore, a regular of the mall, states, "When Friday arrives, I usually gather a group of friends and head to Woodfield. If we get hungry, we have plenty of restaurants to choose from. If we need clothes, there are millions of stores to check out. Woodfield has it all." Stretching over 2.7 million square feet, Woodfield currently holds the distinction of being the fifth largest shopping mall in the United States. Its immense size offers a dizzying array of retail

"If we need clothes, there are millions of stores to check out. Woodfield has it all."

options.

Aside from the shopping and enticing restaurants, Woodfield also houses popular events such as celebrity signings, interactive karaoke, and dancing. With 27 million annual visitors, Woodfield clinches the title of the most popular tourist destination in Illinois; it's no wonder why people from not only the northwest suburbs but the entire country might look at Woodfield as one of the must-see tourist attractions of the Chicagoland area. As the holiday season rolls around, Woodfield becomes Hell on Earth, but the groups of juveniles never disperse. This leads me to believe that the

mall is a place where suburban teens can escape their daily lives and focus on shopping, relaxing, or getting their fix of daily gossip.

If we must be trapped within the confines of suburbia, we might as well sing and dance the pain away. Another common escape for adolescents is music. Many suburban teenagers escape into the lyrical world of music to detour the anxiety of having nothing to do. Others just enjoy cutting back and getting loose to their favorite beats. Perhaps music exists because of the need for expression of emotions that "can only crudely be measured or described in words" (Leeds 2). Regardless of the reason, live music is so popular it exists even in the culturally deprived suburbs. One

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Fat Nation?

Andrea Lett

There goes mom leaving work, making her first stop at Starbucks, grabbing her triple venti vanilla skim latte, then she's on her way to take the kids through the McDonalds drive-thru for Happy Meals, off to soccer practice, then ballet lessons, then piano and finally home at 8:30 just in time to put the kids to bed.

Sound familiar? Suburban lifestyles have drastically changed over the years. The traditional family from just a few decades ago no longer exists. Mothers seldom stay home cooking dinner, the kids aren't walking home from school or playing outside till sunset, and fathers are not always arriving home

just in time for supper. Now families are constantly on the go. This sort of structured, fast-paced lifestyle could sound appealing to some, but it has actually contributed to health problems in the United States. According to an employee at Lifetime Fitness, "people in suburban areas strive to get in shape, but the lifestyles of these people makes it extremely difficult for them."

Researchers reported one out of four women and one out of three men are medically obese. These are numbers that have nearly doubled in the past few decades. Obesity is turning into an epidemic in the United States

and the figures are multiplying each day. So what is causing this "obesity outbreak?" Among the obvious reasons are poor diet and lack of exercise; however, studies performed in recent years prove that these are not the only reasons for society packing on the pounds. Suburban sprawl is also a tremendous contributor to sky-rocketing obesity rates. Although studies do not prove that living in the suburbs causes obesity, there are definitely correlations showing relationships between the two.

For the past few decades, more and more families have been moving out to the suburbs in search of cheaper, better quality houses and a bet-

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1961. Over the next few decades, the population increased, along with most other suburbs in the area northwest of Chicago. Mrs. Gannon said that while the area was still developing "there was only one grocery store and one crummy shoe store." Major corporations were taking part in the industrialization of the new village by 1980; included in the development were Sieman's Gammasonics, Northwest Corporate Center, and Greenspoint. In 1991, Ameritech opened its regional headquarters in Hoffman Estates. One year later, a big year for the area, Sears, Roebuck, & Co. also moved their headquarters to Hoffman Estates.

The village of Palatine was founded in 1855. Lamplighter Inn, on what is now North Bothwell Street, was built around this time. The Lamplighter Inn's structure remains the same as it did over 150 years ago, but it is now a popular drinking hole. Eleven years later Palatine was incorporated. It is thought to be Ela Wood who first settled in the area, but it was Joel Wood who surveyed the village, giving him the title of Palatine's founder. Palatine experienced tremendous and steady growth from 1866 until the mid-1970s during Chicago's suburban sprawl. In 1972, a group of airline pilots established the well-liked, neighborhood tavern Durty Nellies. It wasn't until the last two decades that Palatine really became the town we know. "Palatine" was named after Palatine, NY, but the actual word "palatine" means "to have royal privileges." In 1993, Palatine was put on the map for a horrific mass murder. At Brown's Chicken & Pasta restaurant, seven employees were herded into a cooler and slain with a .38-language spoken.

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Harper College's first student—Tim Griffith, 17, he's third from the left—gets a preview of Harper's future campus from (l. to r.) Donn Stansbury, director of admissions; Harper College president, Dr. Robert Lahti, and Dr. James Harve, dean of students.

-caliber revolver. For years this was looked at as the perfect crime, but ten years later, DNA tests identified the killer from a piece of chicken he had eaten earlier. Today, Palatine is the most diverse of the northwest suburbs, with over 100 languages spoken.

Palatine is also home to Harper College. As the northwest suburbs grew, the residents of this new area agreed they needed a post-secondary institution. In 1966, William Rainey Harper Col-

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lege was founded and established accreditation in March of 1971. In September 1967, 1,725, Harper students first matriculated choosing from only 284 courses. That same year the school newspaper began. In one year, enrollment almost doubled to 3,700 students. In 1969 the enrollment increased to 5,400. As of the 2005/2006 school year, Harper had 25,815 enrolled-for-credit students and 13,630 continuing-education students. From a community's hopes back in the sixties to now, Harper College has come a long way. The name of our college is a tribute to William Rainey Harper – a founder of the two-year college movement.

Although Arlington Heights started early, it wasn't incorporated as Arlington Heights until 1887 when its population reached 1,000. The area became noticed because of William Dunton, who influenced the Illinois & Wisconsin Railroad to include this area

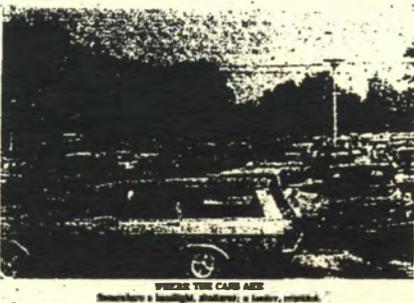
in their stops. In fact, Arlington Heights was originally known as Dunton. The area was known for its lack of trees and the residents were primarily commuters to and from the city. In 1927, California millionaire H.D. Brown opened the racetrack, what Mrs. Gannon called a "plum for Arlington Heights." Today the area is known as "a great place to call home." By the 1970s, essentially all the available land was taken.

In the 1830s, German inhabitants signed a peace treaty with the Pottawatomie Indians in the area now known as Mount Prospect. It is claimed that real estate agent Ezra Eggleston was the one to persuade the Chicago Northwestern Railway to institute a train stop in the area of Des Plaines and Mount Prospect. Mr. Eggleston gave the name to the area because he had "high hopes" for the community, and it was on one of Cook County's highest points at 665ft elevation. Although

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Roy Sedrel, director of the data processing program, is the plant hovering over his miniature model of a computer center. The electronic-age doll house represents the buzzing nerve center of many an industrial and business operation.



Parking Lot Poses Bad-Traffic Problem

*It seems the more
the things
change...*

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of the most popular venues in the northwest suburbs is Knights of Columbus, located in Arlington Heights. Knights of Columbus features both amateur bands, such as So They Say, and established bands, such as Halifax. Liane Hayes, a frequent guest of the venue, says, "Knights of Columbus always has really big and entertaining shows. A lot of Chicago-based bands that make it have played there before, like Fall Out Boy." Most shows are packed with innumerable fans dancing and singing along with their favorite bands. It is safe to say that music is the opiate of the suburbs.

One last main attraction specific to the northwest suburbs is Arlington Park. There is nothing like spending a day outdoors while gazing at horses speeding around in circles. Maybe racing won't draw the

younger generation to Arlington Park, but the track is not just about the horses. The most popular feature of the track is gambling, which is off limits anybody under 18. This, ultimately, can and will influence minors' overall mood for the worse, but Arlington officials recognized this, which is why they also schedule various events such as a Chef's Fest and Fourth of July fireworks. Who could resist a buffet of authentic food or a magnificent fireworks display? While Woodfield and Knights of Columbus grant independence from adults, Arlington Park focuses on bringing the family together. Christina Daniello says it best: "No matter if you get along with your irritating siblings or not, family is and will always be important to everyone. I always have a blast when my family goes to the annual Fourth of July fireworks at

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Growing Up in the 'Burbs

Andrea Lett

Sometimes, I stop and wonder how different my life would be if I had been raised someplace besides the beautiful northwest suburbs. For instance, growing up in a small, rural town such as Richmond, Illinois would have most likely made me a much different person than I am today. Likewise, if I had been raised in the urban parts of Chicago, Illinois, I would have adapted to different lifestyles. It is interesting to see the different types of people in this world and relate them to the areas in which they have been raised. I am well aware that growing up in Arlington Heights, Illinois has taught me different ways of living than people who grow up in rural and urban settings. I have enjoyed the luxury of driving in minutes to the grocery store, twenty-screen movie theaters, shopping malls, etc., whereas rural citizens sometimes have to travel miles to the general store and urban citizens have the difficulty of dealing with large populations, parking, and such. Although this depiction of rural settings seems like a very antiquated situation, some areas of the United States still fit this description. So, does growing up in a suburban area make you a bet-

ter person than those raised in rural or urban settings? Of course not; but it nevertheless profoundly impacts my outlook.

Furthermore, this suburban outlook influences how high school graduates and transfer students choose a college or university. Harper College is set in a suburban area, but many colleges are either in very small towns or large urban settings. So why do students who have grown up in the suburbs choose to travel long distances to small rural settings, such as Macomb, Illinois, or on the contrary, large urban settings such as Chicago, Illinois? There are slim to no differences between the education that an NYU graduate and a SIU grad receives, but why did they choose such drastically different college surroundings?

A Western Illinois University student claims, "I chose Macomb, Illinois because it seemed so different from Mount Prospect. I wanted to go to college and find change. Western would give me the opportunity to live a new lifestyle away from home." She continued to speak of how different her life has been since moving to Macomb, Illinois; "we have to

travel at least forty-five minutes to Target, and all the way to Springfield in order to get to a shopping mall." Granted, not all rural areas seem like "the middle of nowhere," but this description is fit for many towns like Macomb.

Likewise, a University of Illinois-Chicago student who is originally from Oklahoma, responded, "I came to UIC for a change and I knew that the city would offer me a new environment to live in. However, I have discovered that city-life is drastically different than my hometown. There are a lot of skyscrapers and various cultures of people."

People from the suburbs transfer to the city for various reasons, including the fact that it is close to home. The city also provides more opportunity for students to discover internships and future employment. Unfortunately, many schools in rural areas are perceived as being "party schools" and do not offer as much opportunity as far as discovering future jobs.

There is probably no way of proving that the place in which

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the area had its first subdivision in 1871, it was not until 1917, when a newborn baby became its 300th resident, that the village got incorporated. Village leaders preserved the area as a middle-class residential haven. The Randhurst Mall mildly defied the village officials' ideals. The mall, built in 1962, was the biggest enclosed air

-conditioned space in America at the time. Included in this was a bomb shelter to house all the residents of village. In 1992, as the village revitalized, the the campaign slogan was to "keep the small in small town."

Barrington was prominent for its rich soil and natural water supply. New settlers of the area were mainly from New York State, Vermont, and Massachusetts. As the city of Chicago be-

came more populated, Barrington was a place for wealthy businessmen that were looking for rustic space. Streamwood, originally known as "Plywood City," grew in the 1950s as people looked to get out of the city. All the first homes in the area were preassembled and transported from Indiana, giving significance to the prior name. "Hoosier Grove" was the name of the area before it became "Plywood City," then later it was incorporated

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Suburban Identity Crisis

Ian Taylor

The great cultures of Western Civilization all have their staples so deeply stamped into their cultural identities that one cannot without difficulty separate them from its people. One often, for instance, imagines Parisians drinking cups of coffee and smoking thin, unfiltered cigarettes on sidewalk cafes or in front of canvases on waterfront parks, or Englishmen drinking tea or gin and smoking pipes while debating Shakespeare and politics with sere wit and puns. Germans drink bier and dance to waltzes, among other things, in the minds of all Americans, while Spaniards serenade their women with soft etudes of romance on oversized guitars.

America, too, is not without its rich, deep-rooted cultural heritages equally essential to their people. Yet America is far more diverse, so diverse, in fact, that culture almost defies geography. Although many Americans might think all New Yorkers are rude Wall Street snobs in a great hurry to read cartoons that make no sense, any "New Yorker" will tell you they are not from New York but Queens, the Bronx, Manhattan, or Brooklyn, each further divided into countless unique neighborhoods, each with their own distinct cultures. Likewise, not all Chicagoans are Bill Swerski's inebriated Superfans, and none are from Chicago, rather a "side" and often a "block" but never simply Chicago, unless, of course, they aren't from Chicago.

The suburbs of Chicago do not have blocks or boroughs, sides or even streets (none of interest anyway). They have the northwest, North, south, and southwest suburbs, each divided into countless towns, townships, cities, and municipalities, all identical. So, it is no wonder, when someone from the suburbs travels out of town, they are never from Schaumburg or Palatine or Elk Grove or Wheeling, but simply a suburb of Chicago or even just Chicago.

Although these geographical generalizations do well to avoid the confusion of explaining one's exact location, because "pretty far north of Chicago, but still generally considered one of its suburbs" is quite wordy, they expose the suburbs' lack of their own unique identity. Those from the suburbs do not make these generalizations just because no one else would recognize the name of their town. Those from the suburbs invariably lack a deeper sense of connection with their hometown. Unless they are running for office, suburbanites seldom have the loyalty to themselves that one finds in larger cities where residents can trace their local genealogies further than one or two generations. True, I suppose, suburbs have some degree of school spirit to serve in the stead of heritage

and culture, but ultimately, one school is as good as another, and a suburbanite is at home or near homes in whichever suburb he goes.

However, one cannot necessarily blame a town for being obscure or its people for lacking pride; something in the suburbs seems to necessitate such apathy towards identity. Much of this likely stems from the suburbs' peculiar layouts, which, except for the developers who designed them, seem to affect everyone adversely. By reserving such a large and uninterrupted amount of land strictly for housing, those who planned these communities have made automobiles necessary for even relatively local travel. People must drive remarkably far to find work, grocery stores, or any remnant of what most would consider civilization, and because of this, suburbanites will seldom meet their own neighbors outside of their neighborhood.

This contrasts greatly with the cities from which many of our ancestors came, where one's neighbors were often one's coworkers and one's friends. In the suburbs, however, people do not know their neighbors or even see them. People go from their homes to their cars and scurry like queenless ants in every direction, often without seeing the light of day. Suburban culture is essentially anonymity. Suburbs aren't communities in the way that the great cities of civilization have been in the past, but rather collections of individuals with no concern for connections and relationships with the people around them.

This may seem cold, but it is inevitable. In times when one relied on one's neighbors to survive, strong communities were necessary. When each community served as its own economic center, it was important to support one another, and sharing a job and a community strengthened people's loyalty to their area. People do not share such things in the suburbs. In the suburbs, however, each house is a fully self-sustainable island and must be to survive. They need not even shop at the same grocery stores; Palatine alone has more than I can count.

It is clear, then, why the suburbs lack identity if those from the suburbs cannot even identify their neighbors, and if people do not intermingle with their neighbors, a culture cannot form. Imagine, if all Parisians simply sat at home, smoked, drank, and painted in private, no one would know that they smoked, drank, or painted. Englishmen could read every work of Shakespeare eight times over and know every member of parliament in detail but

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The History

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as Streamwood. The area was initially settled by Germans who used the area for farming. During that time the only transportation was a stagecoach line on what is now Route 20. Crystal Lake received its name from Ziba S. Beardsley, who traveled in a covered wagon from New York State in 1835; she commented on the shores that the "waters were as clear as crystal." During the 1920s, Crystal Lake was a popular vacation spot for the wealthy.

In the 1960s, with the expansion of O'Hare, the northwest suburbs became ideal for airline pilots. O'Hare International Airport was named at the suggestion of editor and publisher of the Chicago Tribune, Colonel Robert McCormick, in honor of Lieutenant Edward "Butch" O'Hare, Chicago-raised United States Navy pilot. In November 1943, Mr. O'Hare was shot down and lost at sea. O'Hare International Airport was constructed in 1942-1943 as a place to manufacture Douglas-C54s during WWII. When the war ended, Chicago became the busiest airport. Unfortunately for the homeowners in Bensenville and Des Plaines, the Commissioners for O'Hare airport purchased the land from the US government next to the preexisting area, which, at this point, was not named O'Hare. In 1949, the commissioners had purchased more land and renamed the airport. The airport did not open for commercial flights until 1955. O'Hare has been voted Best Airport for the past nine years. But why do our claim checks say ORD when we pick up our bags from baggage claim? The land purchased to build this international convenience was an Orchard Field.

"The Burbs" are still ever changing and ever populating. Mrs. Gannon, when asked why she moved from the city, replied, "Nine kids." Obviously suburbia was popular during the 1950s and 1960s as a good place to raise a family outside of Chicago. "[The suburbs] were a place to plant your own trees, make it your own," said Mrs. Gannon. The amenities we have today are only here because of what those before us built. Some may say that they are stuck in suburbia – trapped in this desolate place with no excitement. This may be true, but imagine living here without highways, cars, and railroads, like those who lived here before us.

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Suburban Identity Crisis *Continued from page 6*

never say a word, and every German could be waltzing with himself. This seems unfathomable, but people of the suburbs often have no idea what those who live next door are doing inside their homes, what they last read, or what they prefer to drink.

Suburbs, in fact, could have a very rich culture, and everyone could have the same tastes, opinions, and pastimes, but no one knows. Each suburban resident is a person without a people, home, and country and therefore lacks the cultural identity that follows from these things. This, however, is perhaps the greatest cultural element of the suburbs. Since the conception of Suburbia, every generation to flow from its

houssy plains has been a lost generation, a mass of blank slates on which any element from any culture could make its chalky mark. Without the burden of heritage or culture, each generation has had the chance to redefine itself on its own terms and in its own image, and without the burden of a homeland, each is free to go where one pleases.

As unnatural and un-American as they are, the suburbs offer an excellent opportunity to escape, and, indeed, give its residents something to escape from. It is just a wonder that they can stay populated and even grow.

Growing Up

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you grow up affects a student's college choice, but there are perhaps certain aspects of childhood and where you were raised that contribute to the decision. Whether it is for reasons much like the Western student's, the desire for change, or to get away from home, there are unquestionably contributing factors that lead to your decision, which very well may have to do with the place in which you were raised.

Culture

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at Arlington.”

After reviewing three locations specific to the northwest suburbs, I feel it is safe to declare that suburban cultural opportunities are often similar to urban ones. Again, the suburbs may have more than rural areas, but urban areas certainly have more than the suburbs do, hands down. Woodfield's counterparts are Michigan Avenue and Navy Pier. Likewise, Knights of Columbus is outmatched by the Metro and the House of Blues. Arlington Park comes nowhere close to Wrigley Field or Soldier Field. While urban culture overshadows suburban culture, the biggest difference between the two is our perception of our cultural options. Typically, most urban adolescents enjoy the active and fast-paced lifestyle that a city can offer. In contrast, the majority of suburban adolescents can't bear living in suburbia. This leads me to the conclusion that the two options suburbanites follow are to either leave or, unfortunately, fall under the influence; neither of which are particularly palatable.

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Fat

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ter lifestyle for their families. People are reluctant to believe that the suburbs cause poor health, but it seems that certain ways of living, such as the lifestyle of many suburbanites may, in fact, relate to the obesity epidemic. In the suburbs people are forced to drive everywhere, and it is unrealistic for the average citizen to walk five miles to and from work each day. Another interesting point to consider is the risks that this new location pattern poses for suburban children. In past decades suburban kids were always able to walk or ride their bikes to a friend's house or sporting event. However, nowadays that is not at all the case. Kids are constantly being driven around by their parents in order to get places. This is in part the parents' fault, but society is also to blame. In the past, kids were able to travel alone because the suburbs were a safe place to be; however, now kids are unable to play at the park on the corner of their street because of the fear of kidnappings. Therefore, the struggle to keep children safe contributes to their obesity.

Another reason the suburbs can correlate with obesity is because of the location of stores, employment, and schools. These necessary places are spread out across the suburbs; therefore people are forced to drive everywhere they need to go. This type of lifestyle is almost unheard of in largely populated urban cities because it is simple to travel without a car.

The city also facilitates exercise for its citizens. That be-

ing said, people in the suburbs are not necessarily lazy, but city people, especially ones who reside in Chicago, are able to enjoy runs along the lakefront, walks to museums, and strolls through city streets. According to an article found in *Health & Place* magazine, "the dramatic rise in obesity levels over the past decade gives public health officials reason for concern. Most proposals focus on changing the nation's lifestyle choices (e.g., diet and exercise routine). Here we suggest that the lifestyle choices may be heavily influenced by residential location patterns. The new location patterns tend to be unfriendly to pedestrians." Not only does obesity cause chronic illnesses such as heart disease, diabetes, and certain cancers, but it also ruins one's self-esteem, which may lead to mental illnesses like depression.

Therefore, living in the suburbs is not necessarily the cause for the rising obesity epidemic, but there is definitely evidence that shows a correlation between the two. Obesity is a disease that is affecting almost 20 percent of the population. Not only is it detrimental to one's health, but, according to *Health & Place* magazine, it is also an extremely costly sickness to cure and significantly increases the United States' mortality rate. It is crucial that citizens of the suburbs transform their lifestyles and force exercise into their daily routines or this epidemic will only continue to rapidly spread throughout the entire nation.

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The Suburbs' One Salvation

Ian Taylor

For all that the northwestern suburbs of Chicago lack, in entertainment, culture, identity, they have to their credit a public school system is than better than most. Those who must endure a suburban education often fail to appreciate this when overwhelmed with its faults. Indeed, Kareem Elnahal, a valedictorian of a suburban New Jersey high school who used his graduation speech as a platform to lament America's public school system, did when he accused his school of teaching information rather than thought and claimed that "the education we received was not only incomplete but hollow."

This is likely true; however, one cannot accuse our schools of failing to provide both the opportunity and support to further students' incomplete and hollow education. Although the support offered to students with learning disabilities and troubled home lives ultimately fails some, it succeeds in helping some who would otherwise fall through the cracks.

Most educational experts agree smaller class sizes are vital to a satisfactory education. Obviously, teachers responsible for fewer students are able to devote more time to individuals, which, those not overwhelmed, are often more than willing to do. In providing smaller classes, our area's schools do much better than our urban counterparts, and in addition to this, local schools provide students with better learning materials.

Ana Beatrice Chalo and Diane Rado of the *Chicago Tribune* once reported that over 80 percent of

Illinois textbooks were out-of-date, but disregarding some tattered copies of *Candide* and *Wuthering Heights* (neither of which go out-of-date, although some might argue the latter was antiquated upon publication), the text books I used in high school were generally quite recent and occasionally new. Unlike some of Illinois' schoolchildren, all my history books mentioned the fall of the Soviet Union, and my math books included directions for the eighty-some dollar TI-83 that I was encouraged to buy but provided in class if I chose not to.

In addition to ample teachers, textbooks, and well-paid janitors, the local schools employ counselors, academic and otherwise, to help students succeed. Their thoroughness is reflected in the standardized tests each child in Illinois must take. Fourteen of fifteen schools in our area that took the ISAT and IMAGE tests in 2005 and 2006, according to the Illinois School Report Card available at the *Chicago Tribune* website, met or exceeded state standards; the high school I happened to attend, Palatine, which offers an excellent special education program, was the only one that did not meet state standards. In Chicago, many more schools failed.

Because of its school systems, many people are eager to move to the NW suburbs, and those looking for homes deeply consider local public schools when choosing a home. Local realtor Mary Zentz estimates that around 60 percent of her clients consider an area's local schools when buying a home, and Jerry Hoffman, a RE/MAX agent in Elk Grove village, sug-

gests over 80 percent. One realtor said that, from her experience, probably 90 to 95 percent of her clients consider quality public schools their chief concern. Although such estimates vary, it is certain that education is important to those in the NW suburbs. Zentz also added that parents aren't the only ones who care to live in neighborhoods with good schools; "resale is tied to the desirability of an area, and [many homebuyers] want a house that is easy to resell."

Quality schooling, however, is costly, and local taxpayers pay much of this cost. Although all three of the realtors I asked agreed that so long as schools perform well, home owners aren't generally too concerned, according to the Illinois Association of School Boards, out of six school tax referenda in 2005, five failed to pass. Among these failing five was Palatine's district fifteen. The ultimate repercussions of this aren't clear, but it raises an important question regarding Illinois' public education system. In an article for the *Chicago Tribune*, Diane Rado notes that Illinois is often criticized for its public school system, which "because it relies heavily on local taxes... fuels unfairness." In Illinois, wealthier areas such as our own more willingly and adequately fund their schools, but the 2005 referenda prove taxpayer fatigue could easily undermine such a system.

Only an alarmist would suggest that our local schools are on

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the verge of economic ruin. Nonetheless they may still lose a significant amount of support to inflation if taxpayers refuse to give them more, and with the state only committing 30 percent of its budget to education, as Redo writes, there is no safety net if this happens. Rod Blagojevich hopes to partially remedy this by raising taxes on Illinois businesses, but one cannot yet say whether this will work or even pass.

Luckily, those in the northwestern suburbs who wish to further their education need not put all their eggs in their elementary and secondary school basket. A number of two-year colleges, such as Harper College, are available to residents of the NW suburbs. Many residents, for various reasons, attend Harper College, some because they cannot afford to attend a four-year school for four years, some because they are not quite ready for four-year schools, and still many others because work or family tether them to this area. Since opening, Harper has helped such students continue their education, many of whom have gone on to earn bachelor's degrees at four-year schools, and Harper continues to do so.

Recently, Harper has been testing the waters to possibly expand this tradition by proposing to offer its own bachelor's degrees in public safety administration/homeland security, and technology management. This proposal, however, has met some opposi-



Former U.S. Secretary of Defense and former 13th district of Illinois Congressman Donald Rumsfeld gives a speech at Harper College's ground breaking ceremony in 1967... seriously. Former *Harbinger* Reporters Garry Loven and Sally Weiler quoted Rumsfeld as saying, "I believe the concept of the community college is sound," and that he hoped that Harper College, presumably like democracy in the Middle East, would encourage surrounding communities to "continue this great opportunity to further themselves."

All vintage photographs courtesy of the Harper College *Harbinger* Vol. 1 Issue No. 2 and 3, 1967, which are available on microfilm in the Harper College library.

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Suburbs' One Salvation

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tion, especially from nearby four-year institution. Harper's argument predictably runs that local officers and by extension the local community will benefit from a bachelor's degree program in public safety administration/homeland security, and since nearby universities do not offer such a program, Harper can and should.

This, of course, could cause marginal trouble for four-year institutions who would like to attract tuition-paying students interested in pursuing a career in this field, but the impact on Harper and its students is less obvious. More important than a possible increase in tuition revenue and the predicted benefits to the community, this could dramatically affect the future of Harper College. For many years, Harper has successfully served a wide range of students with various ambitions and interests; if the bachelor's degree programs do simply as Harper claims, to offer community members what they cannot easily obtain elsewhere, this could be an excellent addition to the college. However, there is always the possibility that such an addition will come at the cost of Harper's transfer programs, and this could easily

devastate the school and the community.

Perhaps only an alarmist would say such a thing, considering Harper College has served academically-inclined students remarkably well, but if it begins to focus too heavily on nonacademic programs it may threaten the future of many potential students unable to attend a four-year institution directly out of high school. Were Harper to lose its strong academic focus, the quality of these studies would certainly suffer. Those who could benefit from Harper may be forced either to go elsewhere or, more tragically, nowhere. Moreover, this scenario would cost the college a great deal of money in tuition revenue and would likely discourage potential donors. Were the college to dramatically shift its focus and still maintain a strong academic standard, the stigma of being perceived as a "vocational" or "technical" school could still lead to similar results.

These programs may, in fact, be an excellent edition to Harper College, and perhaps the state of Illinois or local taxpayers may eventually find a fail-proof formula for school funding. Regardless, the public education offered in the northwestern suburbs of Chicago is less than perfect, but

its standard surpasses what many would consider the status quo. Because of this, its students have an excellent chance of success once they leave the system, but being better is not necessarily being good, and one only needs to be better than the next person to succeed. Nevertheless, one should not take this benefit to the students for granted, and perhaps once we've secured it for them, we can teach them something.

Works cited:

Chalo, Ana Beatrice, Rado, D. "Aging Textbooks Fail Illinois Kids." *Chicago Tribune*. April, 14 2006.
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How Northwest Suburbs Are You?

You have no car; you...

- A. Take public transportation.
- B. Ride a bike.
- C. Stay at home.
- D. Die.

The clothes you are wearing were...

- A. Purchased at Woodfield Mall.
- B. Hand-me-downs from a sibling... who bought them from Woodfield Mall.
- C. Gifts from a relative... who shops At Woodfield Mall.
- D. Purchased on the internet... during class.

Someone asks you where you are from; you say...

- A. Near IKEA.
- B. Near Woodfield Mall.
- C. Near Medieval Times.
- D. Chicago.

Honors Program News

The following Honors courses will be offered in the summer of 2007:

HST 261 (The Civil War), taught by Professor Tom DePalma. The Civil War serves as a bloody and dramatic pivot in American history when it comes to questions of equality and freedom. This course focuses on the causes, events, and immediate outcomes of the period 1848-1865. Political, military, and social history are presented so that students receive a comprehensive understanding of this seminal event in American history. Fulfills Approved Electives gen. ed. requirement. 3 credit hours. Mondays and Wednesdays, 1:10 p.m. to 3:45 p.m.

PSY 101-006 (Introduction to Psychology) with Professor Charles Johnston. Explore the theme of conformity/compliance as a major source of evil in society and pay special attention to social psychology and the psychology of women. Fulfills Social/Behavioral Sciences gen. ed. requirement. 3 credit hours. Tues./Thurs., 1:10p.m.-3:45p.m.

HUM/HST 105 (the "Honors Colloquium"), taught by Professor Richard Middleton-Kaplan. This is the Honors Colloquium class. This course is required for all Honors students who 1) first enrolled at Harper in or after the fall of 2001, and 2) wish to acquire Honors Program Graduation status. Students will survey primary sources from various academic disciplines. Core readings may include selections from Plato, the Buddha, Bacon, Darwin, Freud, Nietzsche, Rousseau, Machiavelli, Swift, Marx, Douglass, and de Beauvoir; these will be supplemented with selections from authors such as Hesiod, Lao Tzu, Confucius, St. Augustine, the Prophet Mohammed, Bede the Venerable, St. Thomas Aquinas, Dante, Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, Black Elk, Jean-Francois Lyotard, and 2003 Nobel Prize winner J. M. Coetzee. Students will select and lead classroom sessions on the readings; students will also have the opportunity to discuss these "great ideas" with Harper professors from across the campus and from many academic disciplines. Fulfills Humanities gen. ed. requirement. 3 credit hours. Tues./Thurs., 1:40 p.m. to 2:55 p.m.,

and these courses will be offered in the fall:

ENG 101 - 045 (Composition I), with Professor Kurt Neumann

PSY 225 - 003 (Theories of Personality), with Professor Charles Johnston

AST 101 - 006 (Astronomy), with Professor Paul Szipiera

LIT 210 - 001 (Introduction to Shakespeare), with Professor Jessica Walsh

PSC 101 - 017 (American Politics and Government), with Professor Bobby Summers

CHM 121 - 003 (General Chemistry), with Professor Andy Kidwell

GEG 101 - 006 (World/Regional Geography), with Professor Veronica Mormino

SPE 101 - 040 (Speech), with Professor Jeff Przybylo

IDS 290 - 024 (Independent Study/The Challenger)

HUM/HST 105 - 001 (Great Ideas of World Civilization), with Professor Trygve Thoreson

Further information is available at the Harper College Honors Website:

<http://www.harpercollege.edu/cluborgs/honors>