

WASHINGTON REPORT

Congressman Edwin D. Eshleman

16th District—Pennsylvania



There is an urban crisis in America. But the crisis that we've all heard so much about and spent so many billions of dollars trying to solve may not be the real crisis at all.

Urban decay may not be the result of teeming ghettos, blighted downtown areas, lack of adequate mass transit systems, insufficient personal income for city residents or one of a hundred other items on which we have centered our attention.

Instead, these things may be symptoms rather than the disease itself. Some study during my recuperation has convinced me that the real disease is far more fundamental. It is the loss of a sense of community.

A sense of community means simply that a person must have some place where he or she has identity. Each individual must feel that he has roots somewhere. It can't be a vague somewhere like a State or even a city. It must be a place small enough that other people know the person and the person knows the other people.

There were always such places within our cities—South Philly in Philadelphia, Brooklyn in New York, Bridgeport in Chicago, and on a smaller scale, but just as important, the Hill in Lancaster and Northside in Lebanon. These

were communities as tightly-knit and small-townish as any village in a rural area. They were places to put down roots and find self identity.

But, systematically, our modern society has gone about destroying those communities within urban areas. Federal programs have been directed toward the whole city with no regard for their effect on the self-contained communities within the city. Urban planners have sent in the bulldozers to level old neighborhoods in the name of redevelopment. City governments have taken more and more power out of the hands of neighborhood officials and concentrated that power in city halls. Social reformers have thrust housing patterns into areas without regard to the established character of those areas.

As old neighborhoods have been destroyed, the sense of community has died. It is impossible for an individual to identify with something as big as the whole city of New York or even the whole city of Lancaster. There has been a loss of a place to call home, and this loss has led to the urban decay that we see today.

Some people simply quit the cities to find a community elsewhere. They moved to the suburbs and established new neighborhoods where each person could feel that he had roots. But these people took with them the talents and the tax dollars that the cities needed to grow. And, therefore, the urban crisis is partially a result of those who fled.

Other people remained within the city, but lacking a sense of identity, they became aimless in their outlook. Property deterioration means little to the man who could care less what his neighbor thinks. It is easier to begin taking a welfare check when there is no one to answer to except some bureaucrat downtown. Education has less personal importance when your child is bused across town instead of sent to the neighborhood school.

Each of these factors, and others like them, have contributed to the deterioration of the cities.

There is still a chance that the sense of community might be regained. Some of the recent cries from within several large cities have been for more community control.

It's important that we listen to those cries, because it may be the only way the cities will be saved. Dollars alone won't do the job.

Dr. Guss Honored

Dr. Samuel B. Guss, professor of veterinary science Extension at Pennsylvania State University, has been named "Extension Veterinarian of the Year" by the American Association of Extension Veterinarians.

Dr. Guss, a past president of the PVMA, was honored at the Association's recent annual meeting in Detroit for his contributions to animal health and veterinary medicine. There are 84 Extension veterinarians in the United States.

A native of Reading, Dr. Guss received his doctor of veterinary medicine degree from the

University of Pennsylvania in 1943.

His major field has been diseases of cattle, sheep and goats.

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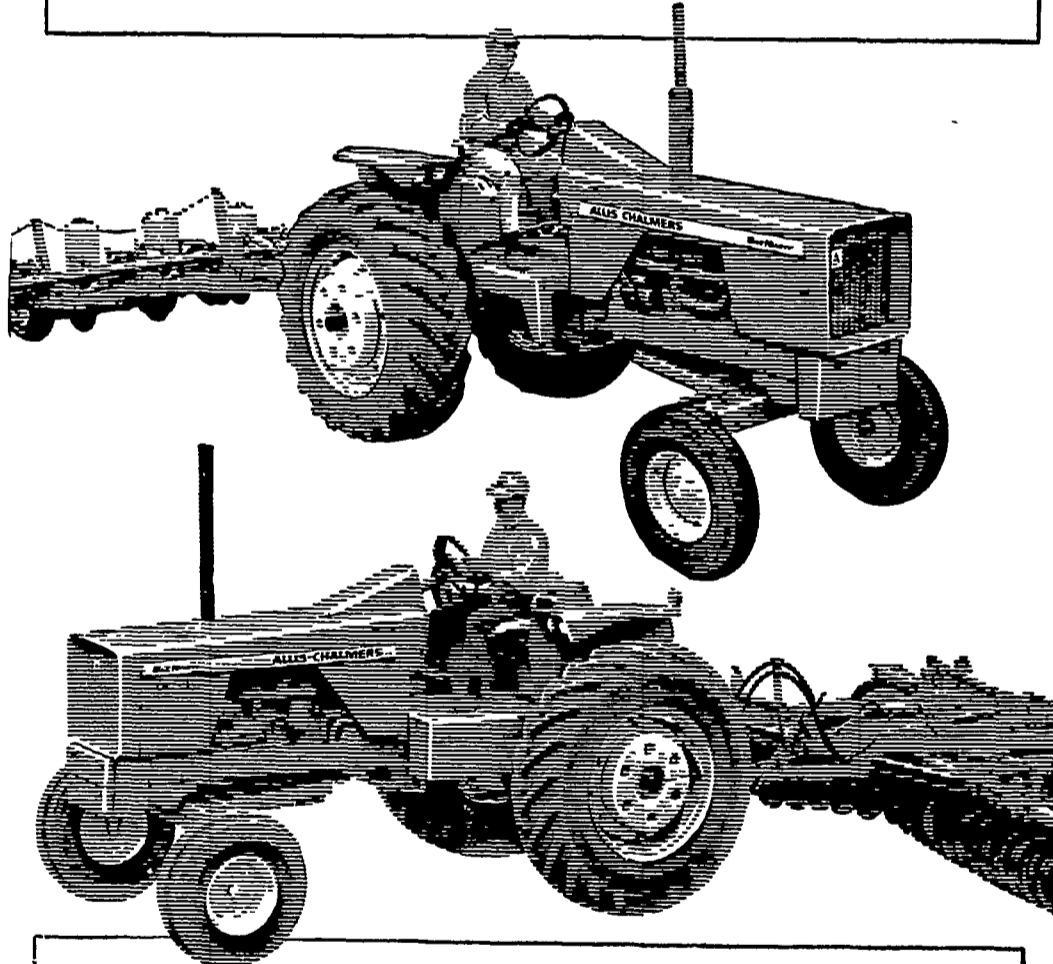
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