Young Prides TROUNCE White Panthers

Fifth Estate Collective

1970

Sunday, May 30 the White Panthers and the Young Prides stepped across Warren Ave. to slug it out with each other.

What a battle!! People were spread out all over the field, running, yelling, swinging. The Panthers were older, for the most part, and had maybe 30 pounds apiece on the Prides, but the Prides had practice and unity on their side.

The Young Prides won.

After seven innings of softball, the score was 22–0 (although unofficial estimates range as high as 25–0).

It may seem strange that political groups (ferocious names and all) would be playing softball with each other. It isn't.

Softball is fun once it's liberated from the honkified attitudes that everyone has to be another Ty Cobb (or hate themselves), women can't (or shouldn't be able to) play well, and that winning or losing makes any difference.

Even more important, the seemingly innocent game was used as a means to deal with a gross injustice which has been and is going down in the Warren- Forest neighborhood, where the Prides and Panthers live.

Matthaei Field, where the game was played, used to be the grooviest neighborhood in the Wayne Campus area. Everything was old but clean, and there were plenty of places for kids to play. People liked their homes and neighbors, and wished simply to stay where they were.

When Wayne State University decided that they wanted the land to expand their campus, people were thrown out of their homes and the neighborhood was razed. All that's left of that neighborhood today is an expanse of grass with a squat tan brick building in the center.

Inside that building are two big swimming pools, a huge gymnasium, and assorted other rooms for exercise and recreation. Also inside are Grosse-Pointers, Oak-Parkers, Southfielders, and other assorted suburban creatures who have a necessary slip of paper to indicate that they are students or faculty of Wayne State University.

What you won't find inside the building are Young Prides, White Panthers or neighborhood kids in general. Because kids from the Warren-Forest neighborhood don't go to Wayne State University. They get fucked-over by Wayne State University.

Most of these kids used to live where Matthaei is. They moved across Warren because it was close and cheap.

They remember that WSU promised them that they could use the field and the pool when it was finished. That was a couple of years ago—they ain't opened the damn doors yet.

These kids aren't stupid—they know what urban renewal (urban removal) means. It means that poor kids don't have the right to have their own buddies (and their parents don't have the right to keep their cherished neighbors) because whole neighborhoods are being busted up for parking lots and shopping

centers and classrooms for people with money. Only people with money have the right to have stable neighborhoods.

The kids know that landlords are letting vacant houses rot because the city or university is going to buy them. They know that garbage isn't picked up and mail isn't delivered because the neighborhood is going to be torn down.

That's right—the Warren-Forest neighborhood (known to city planners as the University II area) is slated to have the same fate as the Matthaei area.

It ain't gonna happen that way. The White Panthers, the Young Prides, PCAUR, Boone's Farm, and all the neighborhood people have had enough lies and pig promises. The neighborhood is theirs because their lives are right in those houses and on those streets.

They're gonna play ball on Matthaei—field everyday, if they want to. They're gonna go swimming in Matthaei pool. They're gonna fix up the whole damn neighborhood and keep it—by any means necessary

Keast, Gribbs, Wayne State Students...everybody—you better believe it!!

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