

A Perspective...

A friend sent me a web site last week that I thought was very interesting. It provides data on any zip code in the United States. Well, naturally my curiosity got the best of me and I wanted to see what my zip code had to say about the community in which I live. Since I have lived in this zip code – even before there were such things – for 58 years, I was interested to see what the data would show. It was quite revealing but not very surprising.

Since I have always been involved in community events and politics, I can't say anything in the report was a new revelation. The demographics of 48336, which is a slice of Farmington/Farmington Hills represents just about 27,000 people. The land area is roughly nine square miles, with 11,564 households. The median household income is \$55,837 and median age for men is 36 and 39 for women. According to the report 48336 is racially diverse with 85% White, 7% Black and Asian/Hispanic making up another 3%. Among employed persons over 18, the largest percentage – 40% - work in management/professional positions.

I then thought it would be interesting to see what 48178 had to say. Although I have now worked in this area for a little over two years, I still am getting to know my way around. Our church has a New Hudson mailing address, but we are in Lyon Township and the zip is 48165. Most of our congregation lives in 48178 – which is South Lyon. I wondered what differences there were between where I lived and where I worked. These two communities that are roughly fifteen miles apart and both in Oakland County. So I “zipped” 48178.

As you may imagine, there were some similarities. Within 48178 there are 23,442 residents. Land area is almost 48 square miles, with 9,272 households. The median household income is \$67,463 and the median age for men is 36 and 37 for women. Racial diversity is practically non-existent in 48178, with Whites at 96%. Among employed persons over 18 years of age, the largest percentage – 43% - work in management/professional positions.

Perhaps the most controversial piece of data facing both 48336 and 48178 has little to do with those statistics and data. There has been a recent report given to the City Councils of both Farmington and Farmington Hills, from an independent survey company hired by Oakland County, to see where both communities might share more services in order to improve the financial future of both. Just this past week, I read in the S. Lyon Herald that there is some discussion afloat regarding a merger or consolidation of the city of South Lyon with Lyon Township. Not knowing all the particulars, I am assuming that this proposal is for financial considerations. In a weakened economy, the people responsible for maintaining all the services within their zip code, becomes serious business. So these talks of shared services, mergers and consolidations are one way to approach future financial challenges.

While all these statistics, data and information are useful tools in making decisions about the future of one's community, they cannot ever reveal the human element. There is always an emotional component in tampering with the status quo that researchers have difficulty addressing. Sometimes we human beings don't use logic and/or reason to make a decision, sometimes we let our heart rule over our head. Sometimes even when the pros outweigh the cons, people will still stick with what is, rather than make a change.

I suspect 48336 and 48178 will have many things to consider in the future. In the meantime, have some fun, and go to www.zipskinny.com and check out what goes on at 90210.

Rev. Suzanne Paul