



MEMO TO YOUR COMMUNITY

BY HERBERT C. ROSENTHAL

■ LOOK AROUND YOUR town and notice your neighborhood. Has it seemed lately that an awful lot of things are changing? People moving away, moving in, houses going up overnight, fires and accidents, a new baby every day? At times it might look as if the town will never settle down. Is this the mental picture you've had of small town America and how it lives?

If it is, it isn't really abnormal at all. If this is happening in your community, you live in the new kind of "normal" town. It has developed since the second World War. It is within hollering distance of a big city but has a definite will

of its own. Its people are youngish and their numbers growing. This is new suburban America, replacing the "average town" of tradition. To find out what goes on in such a community, PAGEANT made a study of one typical postwar suburb: Levittown, Long Island. It has 82,000 people, fairly young; the town is 12 years old and still growing fast. What happens there is typical of the new American "normal." Here is Levittown in 1957, based on official statistics and records. With these facts you can figure out what's going on in your own community, and out-gossip the gossips—with proof.

but first what's your guess?

How well do you know your own town? Just for fun, note down your guess for next year in the categories at right. Then compare your results with the forecast for Levittown. We predict you'll get a surprise. Of course, your town may not match Levittown exactly; the age of a community and its residents makes a lot of difference, especially in vital statistics like birth, death, marriage, sickness. And there are, of course, other variations. But substantially, the path you see here is the one Suburbia will follow.



2

LIFE, DEATH, SICKNESS, DEPARTURES

(Based on 21,340 families—totaling 82,000 persons. Over half are children under 17)

1. Births
2. Deaths
3. Children's disease cases
4. Heart attacks
5. New cancer cases
6. New mental hospital cases
7. Auto accidents
8. Families will move out

SEX & MARRIAGE PROBLEMS

(In a typical Levittown block of 26 houses)

1. of the husbands will be unfaithful during the year.
2. of the wives will be unfaithful during the year.
3. of the wives will get with another man without going all the way.
4. divorces will take place.

CRIME

(Based on 21,340 houses)

1. House burglaries
2. Auto thefts
3. Juvenile delinquency cases
4. Murders
5. Suicides

FIRES

1. homes will have a fire.
2. of these fires will cause serious damage.

FAMILY ECONOMIC LIFE

(In a typical Levittown block of 26 houses)

1. How many will have incomes of over \$10,000 a year? Under \$3,500 a year?
2. How many will owe no personal debts—car payments, installment loans (but excluding mortgages and charge accounts)?
3. How many will owe \$1,000 or more? Will owe more than they have in liquid assets?

4. How many families will be hit by unemployment?
5. How long will the average layoff last?
6. How many wives will work part-time? full time?
7. How many families will buy a new car?
8. How many will undertake a home improvement costing \$50 or more?

POLITICAL, EDUCATIONAL & SOCIAL LIFE

With 36,500 adults, will vote in 1957 local elections.

..... will vote Republican.

..... will vote Democratic.

Out of 285 high school graduates, will go to college.

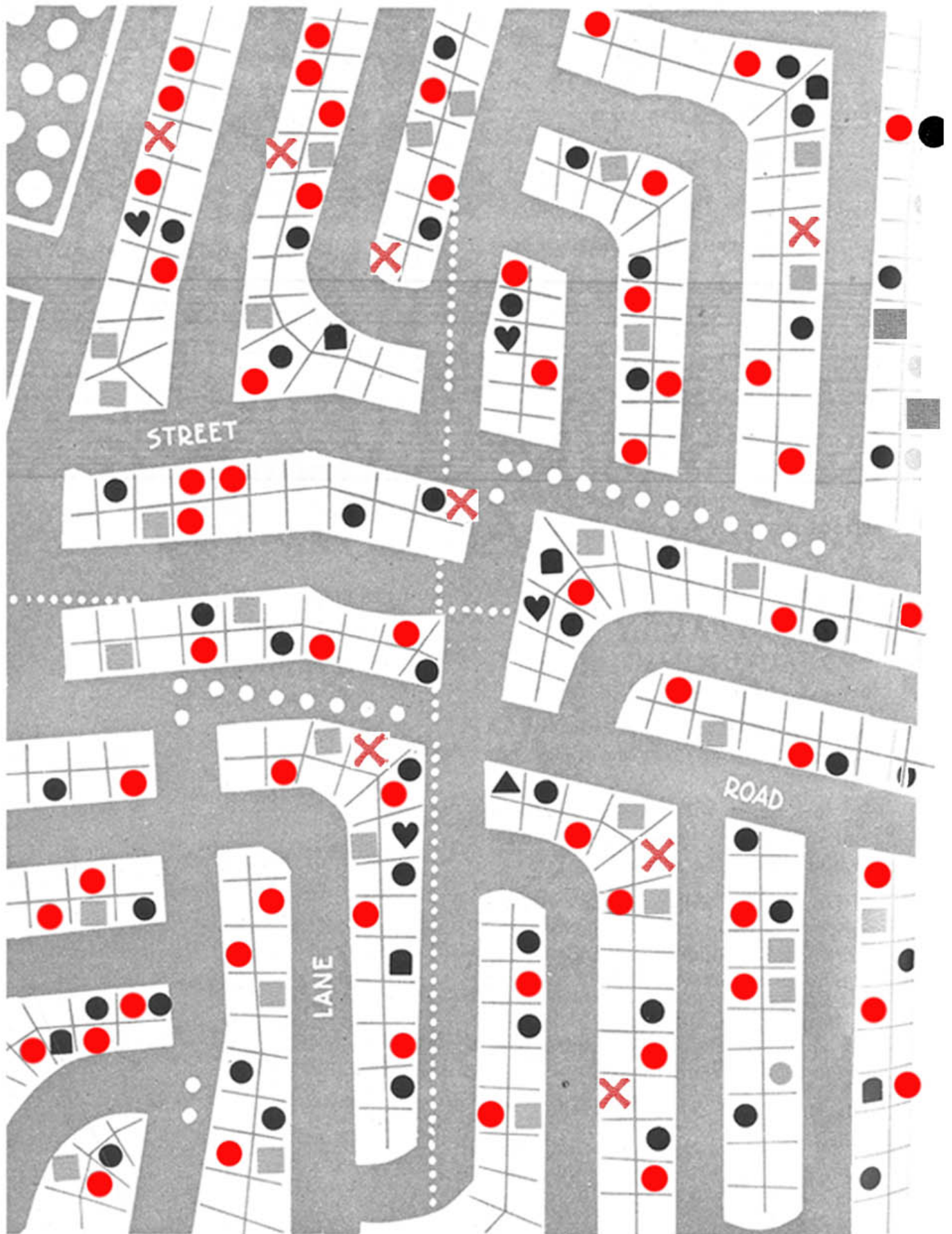
..... out of 5 families will go to PTA meetings regularly.

The average family will entertain times with a year's total of guests.

Will be invited out times for dinner or the evening.

*how life, death⁴ and sickness will
be sprinkled through Levittown*

(AS SHOWN ON A SECTIONAL MAP)



● 2760 BIRTHS

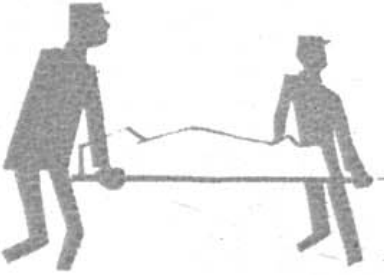


5

■ 1675 CHILDREN'S DISEASE CASES



■ 304 DEATHS



♥ 204 HEART ATTACKS



● 2740 DEPARTURES



✦ 45 NEW CANCER CASES



✕ 355 AUTO ACCIDENTS



▲ 41 NEW MENTAL HOSPITAL CASES



a normal amount of sex and marriage problems will crop up

(IN A TYPICAL LEVITTOWN BLOCK OF 26 HOUSES)



6 of the Husbands will have Sex Experience with Another Woman during the year.



2 of the Wives will have Sex Experience with Another Man. **3** more will engage in Petting without going all the way.

sustained long-term affair, since the whole idea of extra-marital affairs is strongly opposed by society. For Levittown, our prediction is below the national average, as you can see, because of the relative youth of the married couples who live here. You can make the necessary adjustment for age in your own community to see where it stands on this. As for divorces, again Levittown will have fewer than the nation as a whole—about half of the national rate of $9\frac{1}{2}$ per thousand couples. But this is for the opposite reason. These couples are old enough to have survived the critical first three years.



101
Divorces
will take
place

According to Kinsey, by the time married couples reach the age of 40, about one out of every four women have cheated on their husbands—and almost half the men have been unfaithful at least once. The number of women who do this increases as they mature, while the opposite is true for men. It is fairly rare for either men or women to carry on a

*crime
will
touch
few
homes*



26 House Burglaries



30 Juvenile Delinquency Cases



32 Auto Thefts

**NO MURDERS
NO SUICIDES**



60 Serious Home Fires

70 Fires in Autos or Stores

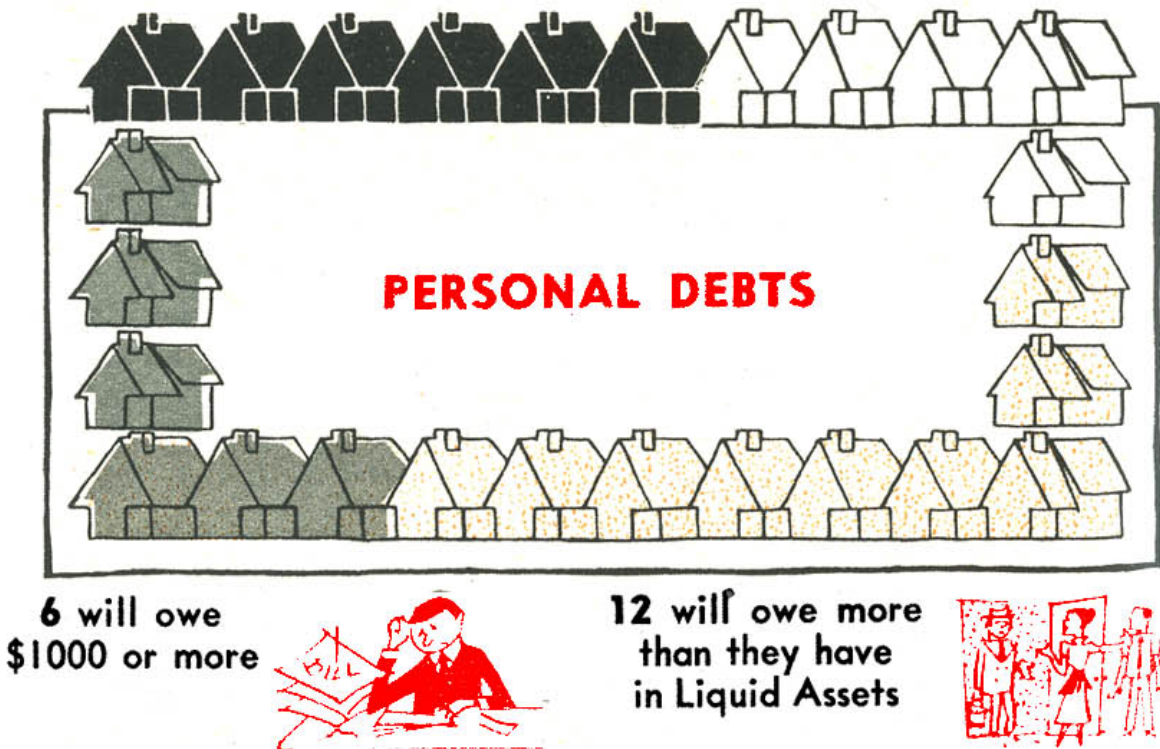
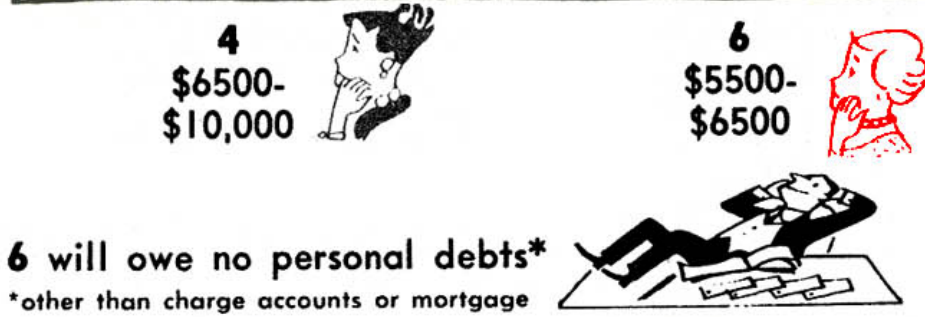
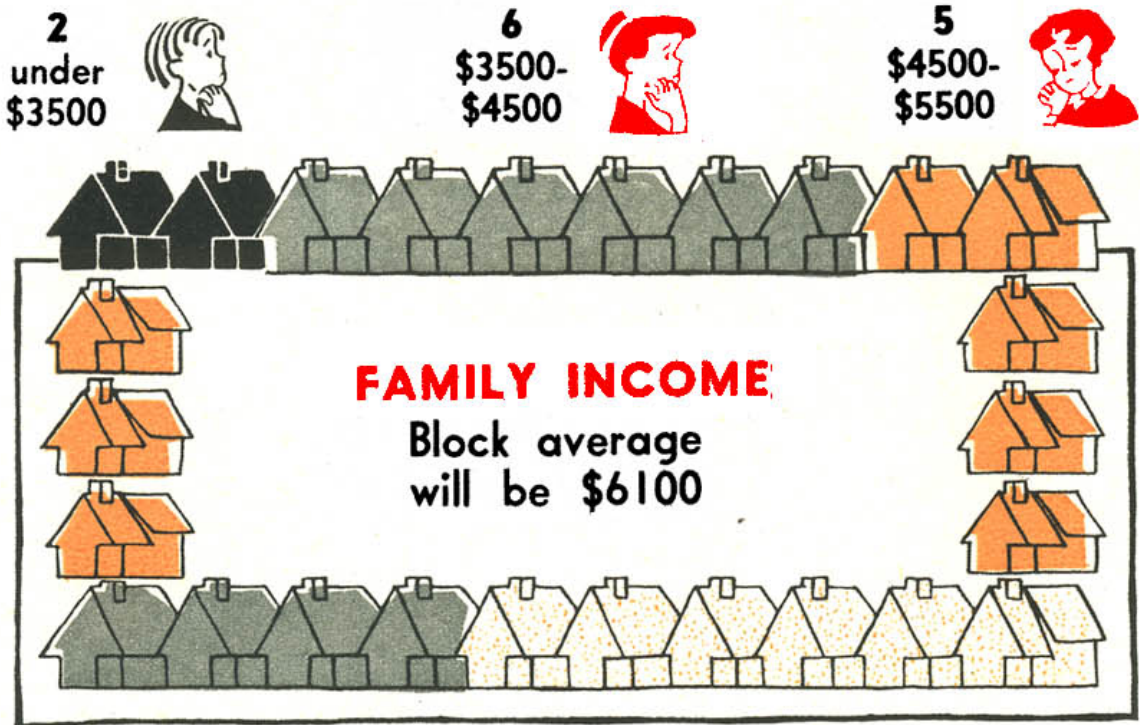
600 minor fires in homes

730
*fires
will
break
out*

CONTINUED
127

and here's how ⁸family economic

(IN A TYPICAL LEVITTOWN BLOCK OF 26 HOUSES)



OldMagazineArticles.com

life will shape up



Unemployment or Layoff will hit one family (average duration 3-4 weeks)



2 Part time



2 Full time

4 Wives will work

3 will buy a New Car

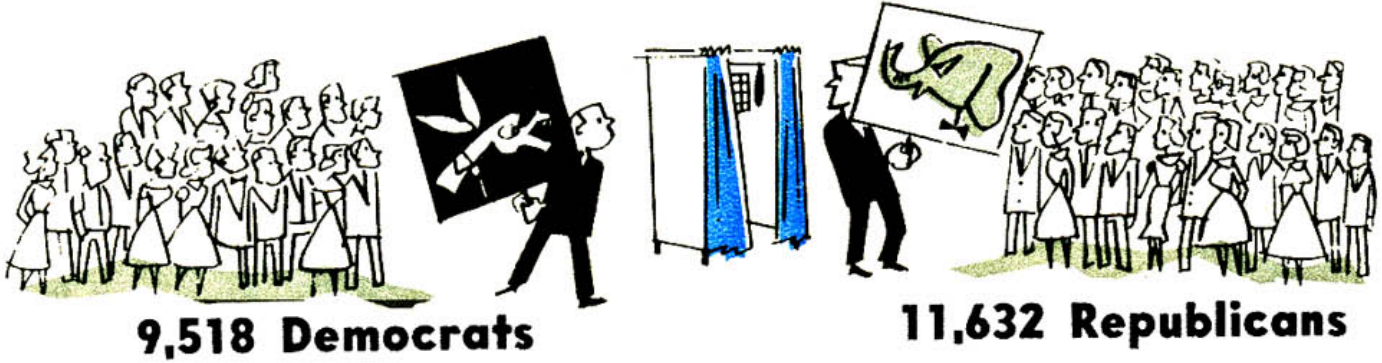


7 will make Home Improvements costing more than \$50

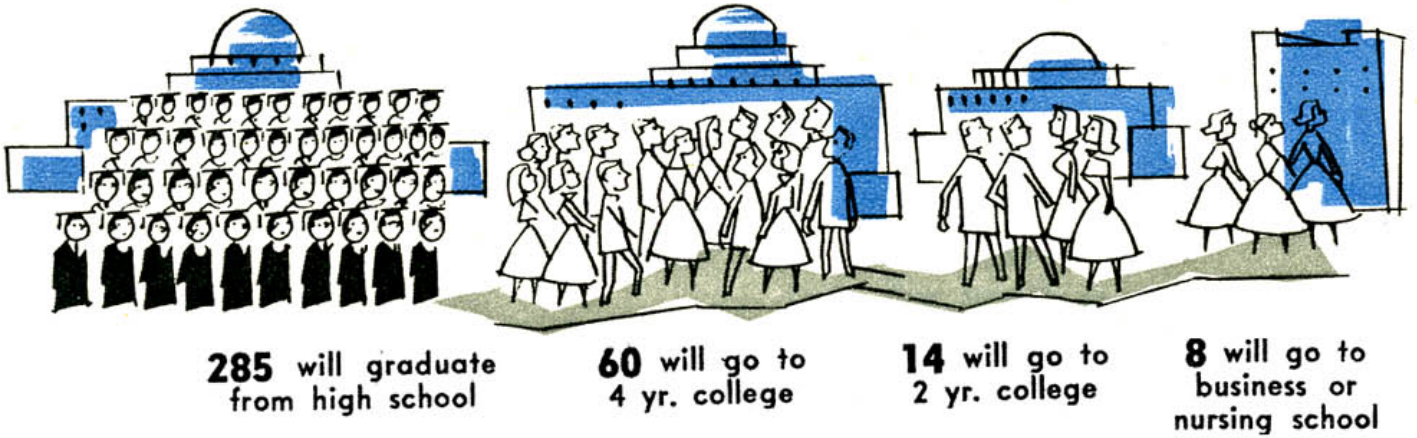


political, educational and social life

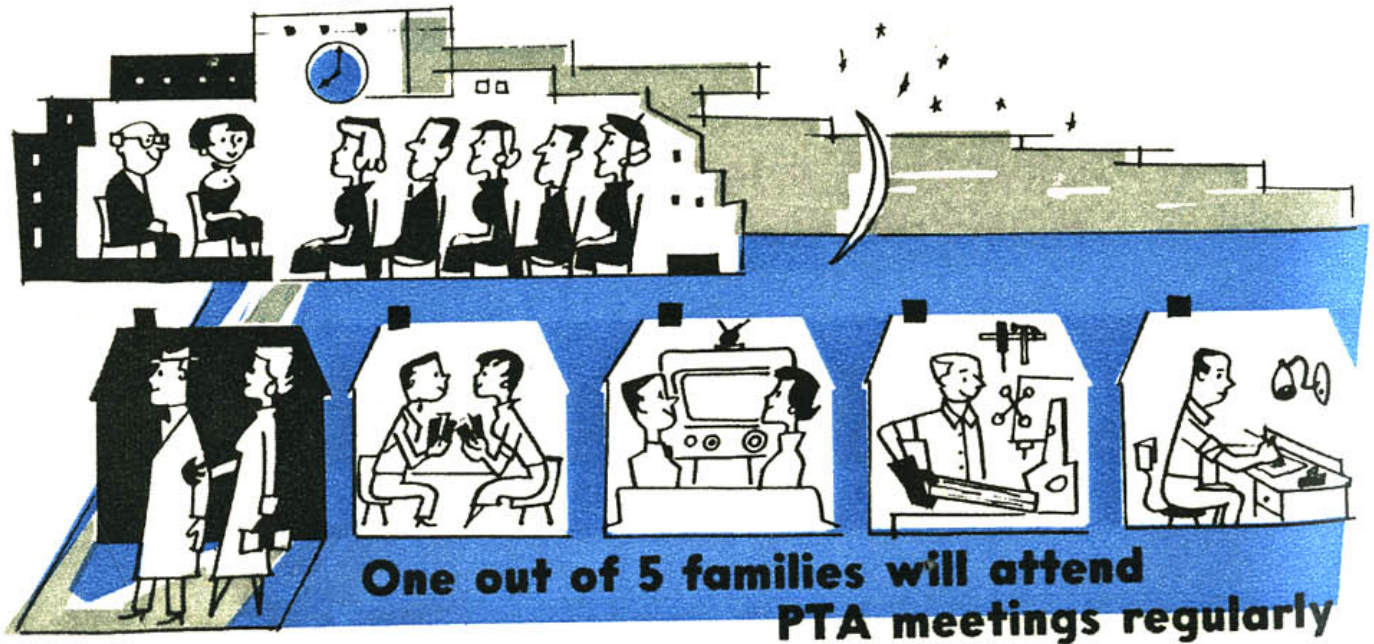
21,150 will vote in 1957 local elections



Higher Education



Community Life





THE AVERAGE FAMILY WILL . . .

. Entertain 12 times with a total of 60 guests

Levittown's families will spend an active and highly productive year in 1957. This busy-ness is a distinctive characteristic of the new suburban communities, and one of the biggest changes from the traditional small town. In Levittown, for example, over half the eligible voters will turn out for local elections, compared to less than one-fourth in the nation as a whole. The town is young and growing, so it will entertain more than most. Its income *and* its indebtedness are higher than average. Its general education (counting the students still in school) is better than most of the country. But these differences from "normal" are no exceptions to the rule. What's happening is that the differences are writing new rules in more and more towns.

. Be invited over 22 times for dinner or the evening

The bustle and change you may have been puzzled by in your own town are signs of this same new pattern. More is happening to people because people themselves are making more things happen. Levittown is an exception in one interesting particular (even to the "new normal"): because of the large number of very young children, less than one-fourth of the women will do any paid work next year. In the entire nation, however, the number of working wives has been skyrocketing to almost half of their total number. And as Levittown's children grow, their mother too will probably join this company. Levittown, after all, will continue to change from year to year. And so, you can be sure, will your community. ■■

OldMagazineArticles.com