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Twenty-Five Cents

Neo-Nazis intrigue teenagers

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY.

Youngful fascination with violence, militarism and symbolism can play a role in attracting teenagers to neo-Nazi organizations.

So said Richard Lobenthal, regional director of the Anti-Defamation League, who spoke before a group of northern Farmington Hills homeowners last week.

"There is a subtle potential for some involvement with militaristic organizations," Lobenthal said, "unless the family and the school commits itself to social values to dispel a commitment to the Nazis."

He addressed the recent reappearance across the country of small Ku Klux Klan and Nazi groupings.

Concern about a resurgence of these groups into a viable political party is misplaced and "not much more than a journalist's fiction," Lobenthal said.

But while the openly racist groups haven't attracted large numbers in the U.S., they have shown signs of a resurgence in Germany, England and Latin America, according to Lobenthal.

In spite of their lack of success in recruiting upper middle class and middle class adults, Lobenthal said the groups are attracting suburban youngsters. He said affluent youngsters and working class adults between 18-35 share a "fascination" with militaristic groups like the Nazis.

Youngsters are demonstrating against minorities, he said, through vandalism and clubs centering around swastika symbolism.

"The resurgence of Nazis, we're more likely to find out, is in our own homes," Lobenthal said.

Parents are so firmly entrenched in their revulsion against Nazi symbolism, he said, they assume their children share their opinions.

Lobenthal said, "Parents are too sure of their children's values."

Many times, children will pick up unspoken attitudes from parents, he said, shown through a lifted eyebrow or a frown.

LOBENTHAL CITED studies taken recently by Duke University and the National Educational Testing Service which, he said, show an increasingly conservative, anti-democratic attitude among the young.

Historically, the young have been on the left of the political spectrum, Lobenthal said, while older persons have shifted to the right.

But now, he said, the trend is for adults older than 25 to become increasingly involved in questions of open housing, freedom of religion and civil rights.

Lobenthal said surveys show 40 per cent of the young are against open housing, sympathetic to restricting free speech and question the freedom of assembly.

"This trend has taken its toll on civil rights gains made during the late '60s and early '70s," he said.

"Minority aspirations have been blunted," Lobenthal added.

Armed robbers hit gas station

Armed robbers held up a female attendant at a Farmington gas station located at one of the city's busiest intersections Friday morning.

The Gulf station at the corner of Grand River and Orchard Lake Road was hit shortly after 9 a.m. The two robbers, described as a male in his late 20s, and a female companion, took \$100 in cash and the attendant's purse, containing a small amount of money and credit cards.

The suspects were driving a 1968 red Mercury Cougar. The male is described as about six feet tall, balding, with long hair and beard. The woman is described as about 5'7", weighing about 140 pounds.

The robbers were armed with a blue steel automatic revolver, according to Farmington police.



Winged action

Although spring is already here and the snow is almost melted, the Detroit Red Wings are still playing hockey. In fact, the Red Wings have brought aggressive hockey back to the Motor City. They are now locked into a battle for a berth in the post-season

Stanley Cup Playoffs. Jimmy Rutherford stretches out in an attempt to stop a shot from a Colorado Rockies player in a recent game at Olympia Stadium. (Staff photo by Charlie Kidd)

Class explores dilemma of minority lifestyle

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

Each semester Bruce Brown begins his Farmington High School class in minority studies with a game.

At the start, the student players of "Star Power" assume the game is fair. But after a time, consistent losers begin to realize it's rigged.

The winners, however, remain certain their success is based on skill rather than the real reason—the luck of having sat on the right side of the classroom.

Students on the winners' side are subtly slipped extra help in the game. Those destined to lose are denied some types of aid.

By the second round, the losing students understand that the cards have been stacked against them and begin to drop out. Their winning classmates keep on playing, delighted at the new game.

During the following year, winners and losers are regularly asked to compare their Star Power experience to the obstacles facing members of racial minorities in the United States.

BRUCE AVOIDS moralizing and instead encourages his students to question their own beliefs and prejudices from another perspective.

Tests are given at the beginning and end of the year to measure changes in attitude. Usually there is some, according to Brown.

At the beginning of the course, some students frankly admit their hostility to persons of other races.

"They don't have to agree with me," Brown said. "I want them to at least think about why they're a bigot. It's an emotional issue. I want them to be more aware."

"I want them to be unwilling to accept racism when they hear it," he said.

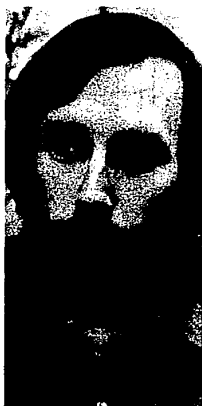
Brown feels it's extremely important that Farmington High students be urged to question their prejudices because many of them will have managerial positions some day.

"These students are going to be bosses. They'll hire and fire. They'll have positions such as a realtor. It's important that they at least question some of the practices that have gone on in the past," he said.

"Intellectually, they see that they're living in an artificial environment. A lot of them believe there isn't that much discrimination out there."

Few of the students who take the class could be characterized as activists or do-gooders. Most, said Brown, are simply concerned about their own future.

DURING the year, students are exposed to issues and ideas important to persons who live outside suburbia. Black and other non-white speakers addressed the class.



Bruce Brown

Last year, students from Mumford High School in northwest Detroit visited Farmington High School. The lone

white student at Mumford and the lone black student at Farmington High were given a chance to describe their situation.

"What they said was basically, those people who don't like you, you stay away from," Brown said.

When a school has an even racial mix, whites and blacks begin to vie for control, Brown said.

"Indians are really big with the kids, now. They can't do any wrong. The kids don't understand why the Indians are discriminated against out west."

Provisions are made in the course to study the special problems and contributions of women, although women aren't numerically a minority. The rationale is that women's relative lack of wealth and power puts them in a situation similar to racial minorities.

The attitude of girls has definitely changed, said Brown. There may be disagreements about feminism and the Equal Rights Amendment, but their horizons are broader.

"They're much more aware that there are other possibilities for them than getting married and being a mother. A lot of them know they don't want to be a housewife," said Brown.

Female cop joins Farmington force

The City of Farmington hired its first female public safety officer, and she may be the first of her kind in the state.

Debra Horner, 22, a Farmington resident, will enter the Oakland Police Academy next month to train for her position as a combined police officer-firefighter under the city's public safety program.

Ms. Horner has a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Eastern Michigan University and placed over 30 other candidates.

About 126 persons applied for the Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA) federally funded position, says Director Dan Byrnes.

Thirty of those applicants qualified under CETA criteria, which mandates unemployment for the past 30 days and residency.

Byrnes says he has wanted to hire a woman public safety officer for the past few years, and was pleased that Ms. Horner topped the candidates.

"With the job as public safety, it's a little more difficult," Byrnes says.

"IT'S VERY hard on some people from the standpoint of career development."

There are few public safety officers in Michigan. Usually criteria for the job is a little more difficult than for a police officer's position, he says. The candidate must pass a difficult physical agility test along with written exams.

Ms. Horner must complete about 280 hours of training at the academy before joining the 23-person public safety department sometime in June.

Neighbors band against harassment

A wave of anti-Semitic incidents that alarmed residents in northern Farmington Hills and southern West Bloomfield six months ago has abated for the time being, but neighborhood residents met at Warner Junior High recently to determine how to prevent recurrences.

Although residents are still reluctant to discuss the matter with the press, the Observer learned the incidents included the burning of a four-foot-by-four-foot wooden Star of David on a front lawn and the scrawling of pro-Nazi sentiments on a neighborhood fence.

Residents kept quiet for fear that publicity would increase the number of incidents.

Until the neighborhood meeting, some residents were unaware of the incidents, which also included name-calling by students in the schools.

There were about four incidents in the schools during the past year and the situation has quieted, according to Farmington school administrators.

STUDENTS reported anti-Semitic remarks by other students and finding swastikas in their books.

School Supt. Lewis Schulman emphasized that the incidents have stopped.

"A majority of our kids handle themselves with care and circumspection," he said.

"It's the position of the school that we will not tolerate any kind of insults to race or creed," he said.

The interest in the Nazi movement is shared by some junior high students who lose their fascination as they grow older, according to Schulman.

To counteract this interest, the school system has used its social studies department and global education curriculum to increase students' sensitivity toward ethnic and racial groups, Schulman said.

Most of the incidents in the schools, as well as in the neighborhoods were concentrated in the northern end of Farmington Hills.

Farmington Hills Police investigated the occurrences but were unable to gather enough evidence to pursue the cases.

In addition to anti-Semitic slogans painted on walls and fences in the area, some residents found pro-Nazi notes tucked behind the wiper blades of their cars, according to police.

THE INCIDENTS were perpetrated by a small number of persons, probably from the area, police speculate.

While some of the residents were concerned that publicity of the incidents, including mention of them in the subdivision's newsletters, would only increase the harassment, others

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Hills Council meets

Farmington Hills Council will meet at 7:30 p.m. Monday in chambers at the city's administration building on Orchard Lake Road and Eleven Mile.

The following items will be considered by the council:

- Public hearing on the necessity for road improvements in the Lincolnshire Estates Subdivision two and three. A date will be considered for a cost hearing as well as a motion of intent to sell bonds.

- Presentation by the Industrial and Economic Development Commission regarding ways in which the city can promote itself.

Unfinished business includes:

- Consideration of an enactment on the rezoning of property on the west side of Orchard Lake Road between Twelve and Thirteen Mile from L-1 (light industry) to B-3 (business service) and P-1 (parking use).

- Consideration to participate in the installation of a storm sewer in Minnow Pond subdivision district one.

- Consideration of enactment to rezone 30301 and 30275 Thirteen Mile between Middle Belt and Orchard Lake Road from SP-1 (special purpose) to OS-1 (office service).

- Consideration of enactment to rezone property on the east side of Haggerty between Thirteen and Fourteen Mile from RA-1 (single family residential) to RP-2 (planned residential).

- Consideration of enactment to rezone 29820 Twelve Mile between Orchard Lake Road and Middle Belt from RA-1 (single family residential) to RC-2.

New business scheduled for the council includes:

- Consideration of a pay back agreement regarding sewer improvement for the outlet D of supervisor's plot in Woodcreek Farms subdivision one.

- Consideration of awarding contract for chloride Dust Control Program.

- Consideration of approval of cash advance to the city of Farmington's Building Authority for handling the remodeling of the 4th District Court Building (formerly Ten Mile Elementary School.)

- Consideration of approval of cash advance to the Farmington Hills Building Authority for construction of a fire hall on Drake between Twelve and Thirteen Mile.

- Consideration of awarding a contract for the purchase of a car for the Farmington Hills Fire Department.

- Consideration of an agreed unit price contract for sign upgrading with the Department of State Highways and Transportation Commission.

- Consideration of a resolution denying the expenditure of city funds to send anyone to a conference on states that have not ratified the Equal Rights Amendment.

- Consideration of a resolution to support the Oakland County Emergency Medical Service executive committee decision to select William Beaumont Hospital as a medical control and communications center for the service.

- Consideration of approval of the Planning and Urban Development agreement with Irv Wilcoxe subdivision planned for the area south of Ten Mile between Middlebelt and Inkster. There are 60.9 acres involved.

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ROMNEY RETURNS

George Romney returned to the podium recently to air his views of the state of politics in the nation. To be cited in on Romney's thoughts, turn to page 4A.

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