

Student editor urges passage of latest Schoolcraft millage

EDITOR'S NOTE: The writer is associate editor of the *Campus Globe* at Schoolcraft College and will be editor-in-chief in fall. The views are her own.

By DIANE BOLDEA

Schoolcraft College officials feel neglected these days.

Area journalists, including those in high school media, were invited to a news conference at the college on the June 11 millage proposal. Advisers were asked to select students. Not one showed up.

Board Chairman Paul Kadish was "aghast" and vice chairman Harry Greenleaf was "appalled" that no Observer Newspapers and the *Campus Globe* came.

The college relations office set up the news conference as a learning experience and a chance for high school students to watch the working press in action, a chance they don't often get.

Also, 20 to 25 per cent of the student journalists' readers will attend Schoolcraft in the near future, and their parents are taxpayers in the district. It would be a natural thing, the publicists thought, for in-district high schools to want to cover, but nobody was interested.

"THE SECRET of success," Benjamin Disraeli once said, "is constancy of purpose." After the fourth school tax defeat in this decade, Schoolcraft College officials must be wondering if this is true as they plunge in for a fifth try in the June 11 election.

The college is seeking a one-half mill tax increase to finish paying for a culinary arts addition to the Waterman Campus Center and another one-half mill for major maintenance and equipment.

The college has a history of tax increase defeats. In September 1971, two proposals — one-half mill for operations and one-half mill for capital — were defeated. In June 1976, a 0.53-mill tax increase proposal was defeated. In June 1977, a 0.8-mill tax increase was voted down. And in the latest effort, March 26, a proposal for a one-mill increase for five years was defeated.

The board is concerned about these defeats and believes that the school districts that the college serves, as well as the students themselves, are showing no interest in the welfare of the college.

For example, in the March 26 elec-

analysis

tion, the total voter turnout (7,000) was less than the enrollment of the college (8,000-plus). With 18 year olds able to vote, nearly all Schoolcraft students were eligible.

SPECULATING ABOUT the causes of community indifference to the needs of Schoolcraft, Kadish and Greenleaf were asked about an old term for the college — "Haggerty High."

They explained the name originated in the 1960s war era when about one-third of the college's students were in vocational-technical programs and the other two-thirds in a liberal arts curriculum. Many didn't hesitate to call themselves draft-dodgers.

In an era of young people "doing their own thing" at such glamorous places as Berkeley and the University of Michigan, the "Haggerty High" image was born.

Kadish and Greenleaf believed attitudes toward the college have changed in recent years and "Haggerty High" is heard less and less.

Seventy-one per cent of all Schoolcraft students today are in career or vocational programs. The other 29 per cent are preparing to transfer to four-year colleges after taking their first two years at Schoolcraft. Kadish believes that, because of the cost of a four-year university, "Simple economics will cause families to consider Schoolcraft more seriously."

Recent findings reveal that within two years of graduation, 20 to 25 per cent of students in district high schools will be on the Schoolcraft campus. The number would rise if a five-year period were considered.

Another recent phenomenon is "reverse transfer" students. These are persons who have already attended universities, and many have earned degrees, sometimes even masters or doctorates. They come to Schoolcraft for reasons ranging from taking job-related courses to earning a license or certificate in a given area.

"They obviously don't consider Schoolcraft 'Haggerty High,'" Greenleaf said.

ANOTHER HALF-MILL on the ballot would go for maintenance and equipment. With all the career programs at Schoolcraft, constant repair and updating of old equipment are

essential, Greenleaf said.

However, much of it is 15 years old, and costs are constantly increasing. One example: In 1974, a set of encyclopedias cost \$300. In 1978, the same set cost \$529.

The board believes its concern over disinterest in the needs of the college is justified because voters haven't approved a tax increase since 1966.

The struggle to provide the community new and updated programs and

equipment is constantly being halted by continuous tax increase defeats, the board said.

Even students take the college's efforts for granted. "After all, there's always money," they shrug.

The board strongly believes that it's time for the students and the community served by Schoolcraft to take another look at the college and how it serves them. If nothing else, at least people could be interested enough to show up and vote.

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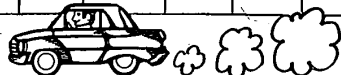
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