

# Car class gets dummies started



Leonard Poger

I refused to pay \$35 for an oil change and lube job.  
If a high school dropout can do the job, why can't I?

After walking into the class session and listening to my classmates, I quickly learned that I would be at the head of the class.

At least I knew where the battery was.

I even had advance knowledge of where the spark plugs were hidden.

One woman, in her late 30s, enrolled for a specific purpose. She brought in her white MG, which had been in storage for several years.

The biggest problem was that a rat had nibbled away at several spark plug wires.

But the rest of the students — high school girls, young working women, and three or four men near retirement age — were there for the same reason I was.

That was to get a minimal knowledge of how a car works, how to change oil and oil filters, and what to do when there are problems on the road.

THERE WAS NO chance of getting a scholarship to General Motors Institute or trying to design my own fuel-efficient engine.

Without offending the Equal Rights Amendment backers, I can say that the men know the radiator from the battery and the engine block.

During the eight week course, our instructor displayed the patience of a saint and showed us the basics of a car and where the important parts of the engine are under the hood.

We learned that we turn off the engine to check the level of oil but keep the car running when checking the level of the transmission fluid.

Our teacher also led through the traditional under-the-hood inspections — testing the tightness of fan belts, levels of engine oil, transmission fluid, brake fluid, and battery water.

There was no exam, but in a bit of a "pre-graduation" final exam, students were given a chance to change spark plugs, engine oil and filter and lubricate required fittings.

A few lucky ones even tightened their brakes.

My big thrill was the changing of a spark plug (my classmates got turns on the other plugs).

I didn't expect any set of sophisticated mechanic tools as a graduation gift, but I did dispel some of the mystery about how my car works.

DID I LATER begin doing some routine maintenance with the knowledge gained from the class?

Not really.  
About the time I got interested in being my own auto repairman last fall, the number of service stations specializing in 10-minute oil changes and lube jobs for \$7 to \$10 began to increase.

I decided to let someone else get his hands dirty.



Tim Richard

## Ward goofs on open meetings

"Dignity is the quality which enables a man who says nothing, does nothing and knows nothing to command a great deal of respect."  
—Josh Wise

George Ward, chairman of the Wayne County Charter Commission, responded with a great deal of dignity to my Jan. 22 criticism of the way he led the group into a closed session.

Ward said that, in his opinion, "all requirements of the Open Meetings Act were met before the Charter Commission received its Personnel Committee report in Executive Session."

He quoted U.S. Supreme Court Justice Robert Jackson on the possibilities of error but concluded, "If my ruling, which I still believe is correct, is ever established as erroneous, I will endeavor to be as graceful and good natured, as was Justice Jackson, in surrendering old views."

WARD'S RESPONSE is as puzzling as it is dignified.

In the first place, there is no such thing as a governmental board "Executive Session" allowable under the Open Meetings Act. It's impossible for a body that is legislative in nature even to conduct an executive session. The Open Meetings Act mentions only "open" meetings (the rule) and "closed" meetings (the exception).

The Open Meetings Act went into effect in 1977. Thus, attorney Ward's use of legal terminology is four years out of date.

In the second place, why did Ward cite an opinion from Robert Jackson? In history, Jackson is best known as the prosecutor of the Nuremberg war crimes trial. Otherwise, he is just another New Deal Supreme Court justice who died in 1954, a generation before the Michigan Open Meetings Act was passed.

Why did Ward waste his time quoting Jackson, who quoted Baron Bramwell, Samuel Johnson and Lord Westbury when he could have consulted the Open Meetings Act?

Ward should have been reading the Open Meetings Act. And that was my whole point: Attorneys don't know the Open Meetings Act.

WHAT THE WAYNE County Charter Commission did, as you recall, was to interview and discuss candidates for the top staff post of executive director in a closed session. One of the candidates requested such a closed session — Ward himself told us that.

On the other hand, here is what the Open Meetings Act says:

"A public body may meet in closed session only for the following purposes:

(1) To review the specific contents of an application for employment or appointment to a public office when the candidate requests that the application remain confidential. However, all interviews by a public body for employment or appointment to a public office shall be held in open meeting pursuant to this act."

And so, having made a fool of himself by guiding the charter commission into a closed session for the interviews and discussion, Ward has compounded the wrongdoing by failing to look up the Open Meetings Act and by pronouncing with great dignity, "If my ruling, which I still believe is correct, is ever established as erroneous, I will endeavor to be as graceful and good natured, as was Justice Jackson, in surrendering old views."

One dare not rely on an attorney to interpret the Open Meetings Act. The vigilant citizen must read it on his/her own.



Shirlee Iden

Someone said Gary Cooper could have played that part.

It was easy to agree looking at the tall Texan, thin almost to gauntness. Relaxed and gregarious, he had greeted all who approached him with questions and small talk.

Cross-legged, he sat on the living room floor. Others waiting to hear his message sat there, too, and all up the stairwell, along the walls and on any available piece of furniture.

It was standing room only in the cozy Franklin home on a recent Friday night. And into the already full rooms, others still crowded.

When it was time, there was no introduction. None was necessary. The tall man stood up, and hands in pockets, began to talk.

"I see only one great adventure left for humanity. That's the quest for peace," Ramsey Clark said.

He spoke of the proliferation of the world's population, pointing out that there will be a billion more people on this planet in just 10 years.

"It won't be seven years of drought that gets us, but seven years of inhumanity."

CLARK SPOKE to a gathering concerned about the newly legislated registration of draft-age males. Though they were of various ages, it was by-and-large a group that had stumbled for peace before. Now they see the registration as leading inevitably to conscription, and that leading to standing armies that will inevitably see action.

In the beginning, it seemed incongruous to see him there in his rumpled blue suit with patch pocket trousers, in his white shirt and red-striped tie, in the argyle socks and tan suede shoes.

Ramsey Clark, son of Supreme Court Justice Tom Clark, was the Attorney General under President Lyndon B. Johnson.

The guy who ran for Senator in the state of New York and lost. The guy who went to Iran for Jimmy Carter, and again on his own. The one they wanted to prosecute for traveling there after Carter had decreed there should be no travel to Iran.

Now, on this day when the hostages have been freed and wait to come home, Clark isn't in Washington, or Wiesbaden, or Tehran, but in Oakland County talking to a packed house.

He tells you when you hear the hostages may have been mistreated that he hears of hundreds of

tortures every day. And our nation is culpable, he says.

Quiet-spoken, calm, low-key, he continues.

"THE RANGE of things that must be done is absolutely stunning. We need to stop research and development for sophisticated ways of killing."

"We need to speak out against intervention in foreign countries. We're the luckiest people on earth. We have abundance and the capacity to solve these problems."

He quotes Washington and Jefferson, who said that large-standing military establishments are foreign to this nation. And in the course of his 20-or-so-minute talk, he quotes from Shakespeare's Hamlet, from the poet Auden, from Walt Whitman, from Robert Oppenheimer, from Albert Einstein, and others. Each quote is delivered unhesitatingly from memory.

"I urge an outright confrontation with the draft — to stop it," he said.

His words convey his deep anguish.

He's against the inhumanity of one person toward another. And he's against politics, government and science used for destruction.

"Oppenheimer, in his sadness, said 'science has known sin.'" Clark reminds. "Einstein said after the bomb, 'Everything changed but our thinking.'"

He made it clear he agrees with CARD and disagrees with former Army general and new Secretary of State Alexander Haig, who says some things are worth fighting for.

"I'm for the demilitarization of America."

It's true, Gary Cooper could have played him. But in this time and place, it's Ramsey Clark, and he's himself — a man for this season.

## Peace: humanity's final quest

## Macho is in, unisex out

Macho is back. Unisex is out.

In case you missed it, the '70s were the decade of the sensitive, non-macho male who could feel comfortable even in traditionally female roles. But the seers who decide what's in and what's out have decreed that macho will make a comeback in the '80s.

The marketing strategists probably already have their messages out to various retailers:

Get with it, Hudson's — Remove the men's toiletry department. If anyone asks, direct them to the Old Spice in the drug department.

Come on, Hughes & Hatcher — No more lavender dress shirts. It's back to basic white. And no paisley ties — solids and subtle stripes only.

Attention, Kitchen Glamor — Stock up on Betty Crocker. No more cookbooks hinting that a man's place could be in the kitchen. Still OK to have a man on the cover of a barbecue cookbook, though.

Creative Playthings — What's that girl doing playing with blocks? Only boys play with blocks. Ditto, Lionel with your train advertising.

Big Three — It's back to bosoms selling cars. No more working women in sensible clothing emphasizing the dependability of compacts. And, while you're at it, better revive the muscle cars.



Marilyn Fitchett

Adios, Atra — Make way for Schick's macho razor. Can that baby face stuff.

IF MACHO is to make it big, we have to take it out of the stores and bring into the homes, too.

YMCA's everywhere — better phase out those soccer leagues. It's back to stressing football and hockey. Let's hear it for blood and guts sports.

Educators — Revive Dick, Jane and Spot. (For those who have forgotten, Dick and Spot were the smart ones.)

Remember, dads — Raising children is women's work. You don't have to pretend to enjoy baby-sitting for your kids any more.

NOW DOES EVERYONE understand the rules? It's easy — for the '80s men will be men and women will be, uh —

Well, . . . I'm not allowed to worry my pretty little head over that.