

## OBSERVATION POINT

# High School Students Need Chance To Speak Up

By Philip H. Power  
Publisher

Spring is bustin' out all over, at last, and with it is coming the usual burst of student activity on college campuses and in local high schools.

Even my short-memory can recollect the days when it was party raids and hot-rodding around country roads.

But no longer. This spring it was a student strike to get increased black admissions at the University of Michigan. It was a student march last week in Southfield in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King's death.

And last week, the question of student political clubs in high schools popped up again.

THIS TIME it was at Clarenceville High School, which serves Livonia, Farmington and a corner of Redford. The Clarenceville school board voted to support, for the time being, the superintendent's veto of a political action club in the high school.

Several hundred people attended the board meeting, with many statements supporting and condemning formation of the Student Mobilization Committee at Clarenceville High.

It's clearly a hot issue and one, if I'm not mistaken, which will become hotter as the months pass.

Student demands for high school recognition of political clubs have already been made and gently rejected by the school board in Livonia. At Southfield High School, some students have asked for the same thing—with the same result.

In most cases, high school administrators have reasoned that political clubs and student involvement in political issues are, in themselves, fine. But what happens if political clubs are recognized and a far-out group such as the White Panthers then demands recognition?

The educators don't want to get trapped into an obviously discriminatory position, approving "acceptable" political clubs but turning down the far-outers.

IN MANY WAYS, this is a reasonable position. It's particularly so when voting taxpayers are likely to reject millage increases if they feel the high schools are spawning revolutionaries at public expense.

But the students do have a point.

Student councils and other in-house student political activities are generally regarded as mostly irrelevant to issues outside the confines of the school. In schools which recognize them, both the young Republicans and Young Democrats, together with their teen versions, are almost totally ineffective. Indeed, neither political party seems comfortable with them. If they shut them down, they could be accused of being anti-youth; but they don't help the party much and cost money and aggravation.

So, goes the student argument, if student councils and the YRs and YDs don't meet our needs, give us something that does. Namely, student political clubs.

MUCH OF THE emotional energy behind demands for student political clubs has come from the war in Vietnam—an issue about which student councils have very little pertinent to say.

Some school administrators hope that when the war ends, such demands will peter out. My guess is that other issues will take Vietnam's place. Pollution. Youth power. Drugs. Perhaps even women's liberation. Certainly sex.

The problem is that established institutions in high schools—student councils and "regular" party youth groups—are very

poorly equipped to express students' interest in such issues.

So students demand some other institution which does the job. School boards and principals, equally naturally, are worried because entirely new institutions are very unpredictable and hard to handle.

MY GUT FEELING is that the high schools are going to have to provide some way for students to get involved in issues which interest them. If they don't, there will be a lot of pent-up feeling, which ultimately will burst out in a much less positive way than merely a political club.

Students and teachers in Plymouth High School learned this just three weeks ago, when

students had the idea for a teaching in on the environment. They planned the program much along the lines of the now-famous teaching at the U. of M. and brought in outside experts.

Almost everyone involved agrees that it was a constructive and educational program, one which both expressed student interest in a new issue and contributed to the goals of education.

If student wishes for institutions through which to express their concern about important issues of our time are to be brought to co-exist with the goals of education and the sensibilities of the voting taxpayers, all sides could do worse than look at Plymouth's innovative and constructive approach.

## IT'S THEIR BAG...



Tim Richard writes

## Test Your Political Thoughts

This, if you haven't noticed, is a political year, and one thing you learn as you cover politics and try to vote intelligently is that you can't simply "look at the record" in judging a candidate.

For one thing, some candidates—Lenore Romney and Zoltan Ferenczy come to mind—have no record because they have never held a major elective public office. For another, legislators have a way of fudging the records with strange parliamentary maneuvers, and you can't tell their real views.

And so, over the years, I've developed a test, in the style of college boards and the rest, to help you determine your own political inclinations as well as those of politicians you listen to and read about. It's called "Left Wing

—Right Wing," and it works like this:

ALL THE ANSWERS are correlated so that far-out right-wingers will tend to pick "a," conservatives "b," liberals "c," and left-wingers "d." Try a few.

1. The nation headed by Mao Tse-tung is:

(a) The Red China conspiracy.  
(b) Communist China.  
(c) Mainland China.  
(d) The People's Democratic Republic of China.

2. White Americans:

(a) Are the leaders of civilization.  
(b) Have contributed much to civilization.  
(c) Should feel guilty.  
(d) Should feel sick with shame.

3. The University of Michigan College of Literature, Science and the Arts:

(a) Is dominated by commies, pot-heads and spoiled brats from Brooklyn.  
(b) Is full of left-wing and impractical people who don't know what it's like to meet a payroll.  
(c) Contains more intellectuals than such merely technical schools as medicine and law.  
(d) Is irrelevant and oppressive to blacks and the disadvantaged.

4. Oil companies are:

(a) Indispensable to the American way of life.  
(b) Good sources of taxes and charitable donations.  
(c) Getting away with murder through tax loopholes.  
(d) Enemies of people, ducks and other living things.

5. Plymouth is:

(a) The flower of Americanism and culture.  
(b) A community of fine homes.  
(c) Undergoing great social change.  
(d) A fascist little Peyton Place.

6. An open housing ordinance:

(a) Is forced housing.  
(b) Should be checked for strict legality by the township attorney, the attorney general, the deans of three law schools, and the Supreme Court and then submitted to a vote of the people.  
(c) Is a fine gesture to the inner-city community to show good will and keep them from rioting.  
(d) Is a farce.

7. SEMCOG (the Southeastern Michigan Council of Governments) is:

(a) An inner-city plot to diminish suburban sovereignty.  
(b) A fine way to get cooperation, if everyone will cooperate.  
(c) Not as good as massive doses of federal aid directly to the cities.  
(d) A suburban plot to prevent the inner-city community from controlling its own destiny.

8. Poor people:

(a) Are lazy and untrustworthy.  
(b) Are to be pitied, but should be zoned out of our community.  
(c) Need massive federal aid programs.  
(d) Have been robbed by racists.

9. Long hair on young males is:

(a) A sign of social and moral depravity.

(b) Messy—but one's own business.

(c) An acceptable method of personal social expression.

(d) Groovy, man.

10. I believe in:

(a) Law-n-order.  
(b) Freedom and justice under the rule of law.

(c) Equal opportunity for all, regardless of, etc.

(d) Power to the people!

R.T. Thompson writes

## Does 50% Attendance Represent Any District?

For some time, Trustee James Boswell, of Livonia, has complained to members of the Schoolcraft College Board that he should have more than one vote.

"As the elected representative of Livonia, which has half of the population in the college district, I feel that I should have three votes," has been Boswell's stand.

"It is ridiculous that my district should have only the same voting power as Clarenceville, Northville or Plymouth. I feel that one vote for Livonia is just like not having any vote. The much smaller districts can and do vote together and Livonia receives short score."

Boswell has made this statement more than once in board meetings and more than once he has stalked out of sessions when his proposals have been rejected by a majority vote.

THIS MOST RECENT action came in a board meeting when he called the makeup of the board "illegal and unconstitutional" and announced he would seek a court order restraining the trustees from acting until the board is reappointed on a "one man, one vote" basis.

That was three or four weeks ago, and to date nothing has been heard of the threatened court action.

All of which leads one to wonder just how well the controversial Boswell is representing Livonia as a Schoolcraft College trustee.

Up to six months ago, the writer covered practically every session of the college board—dating back to the period when it met in the old Newburgh School in Livonia and had the battle of the wasps during the hot summer nights.

So with that background, we decided to check the attendance of Boswell at meetings since he first took office.

A CHECK OF THE records shows he has missed 50% of the

## DISSENT

View points expressed in DISSENT do not necessarily reflect those of Observer Newspapers Inc., but are presented in the belief that publication of all segments of thought on a public issue is a prerequisite to understanding and progress.

By DON EDGAR  
Livonia

This letter is written to set the record straight about recreational vehicles. The same recreational vehicles maligned by James G. Chavez in his recent letter as "tin can monsters."

My family and I have been Livonia residents since March 1, 1958 and have

had three travel trailers since 1959. Each has been stored in our backyard. Our latest trailer is about 19 feet four inches in length, about the size of a typical unit.

First, a recreational vehicle, whether it be a travel trailer, a tent trailer, a pickup truck camper coach or a motor home is not a "tin can monster." Most are made of aluminum with some fiberglass or ABS plastic. Some of these units cost up to \$15,000, most cost in the \$3,000 to \$5,000 range.

There are very few recreational vehicles that are 35 feet long. Most are well under 25 feet. While the trend is to larger trailers, the average size will not even approach 25 feet, much less 35 feet or longer. Most travel trailers are between seven and eight feet high not 10.

WE LIVE in the middle of the block and our trailer sits in front of our garage, more than 10 feet in back of the rear line of our house. It is always ready for the road. Like about 90% of the other recreational vehicle owners in Livonia, we load our trailer in the back yard.

The revised city ordinance—there is one already on the books that is more liberal in some respects than the proposed law—is a fair law. In fact, some trailer owners object to certain portions, especially those pertaining to corner lots.

I, and I am sure, most other recreational vehicle owners are opposed to parking any trailer in the side drive or in front of any residence. As a owner, I must make some penalty in space that I could use for some other activity in my back yard.

So that there is no mistaking my attitude, I live in a house, not a shrine. I have a backyard, not a botanical garden. I feel no responsibility, whatsoever, to create on my property some aesthetic masterpiece for my neighbor's pleasure. I maintain my home and yard in a neat manner.

What goes on in my backyard, so long as it is legal and moral, is my business and not that of my neighbor. Somewhere down the line, a restrictive recreational vehicle storage ordinance is going to be tested on the property owner's constitutional and civil rights.

A RECREATIONAL VEHICLE is anything but a "tin can monster." In reality, it is a magic carpet that whisks a family into the beautiful realm of the outdoors away from the pressures of modern society and intruding neighbors.

In 10 years, we have traveled more than 100,000 miles into some of the farthest reaches of the wilderness. We could not have done this without our trailer. The same is true for almost every family that has a recreational vehicle.

Notice, if you will, that trailerists do not complain about noisy swimming pools, smelly barbecue pits and trash burners, unleashed dogs and undisciplined brats.

But, on the other hand, trailerists are active in conservation, help pick-up litter and always willing to lend a helping hand whenever it is needed.

It has been my privilege to serve as an advisor on the Keep America Beautiful national council. Why? Because I own a trailer.

My family and I were asked by Mrs. Lyndon Johnson to assist her dedicate a new park in Michigan. Why? Because I own a trailer.

Recreational vehicle owners are not gypsies, nor are they second class citizens because of their hobby. They are honest, hard working and respectful. Why then all this unnecessary commotion about parking a trailer in the owner's back yard?

I would suggest that Mr. Chavez and others of his ilk remember where their property ends and their neighbor's begins. The number of recreational vehicles in Livonia will continue to grow as the years pass. Our city will not become a "tin can alley."

The proper solution is a fair recreational vehicle parking ordinance. The city planning commission appointed by former Mayor Melke did an excellent job in the current revision. Mayor-elect McNamara, a travel owner, can do a service to all Livonia residents by upping its enactment.

## Editorial & Opinion

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