

Enrollment is concern

Dwindling dollars worries state PTA

By Teri Banas
staff writer

School finances, declining enrollments and tuition tax credits were foremost on the minds of some 500 delegates who converged on the Livonia Holiday Inn-West last week for the 55th annual statewide PTA convention.

The issues of how to fund public education and the impact of school closings were discussed formally in several of the convention's 15 workshops running through Saturday as well as in informal gatherings that clustered in the hallways and conference rooms of the convention site.

"Financing of our public schools has become a real charge and problem," said Royal Oak delegate Sheila Norris. "When they (legislators) need to cut in some area, it always seems to be that education is first on their minds."

In the past three years, said Norris, PTA members have had to become "more aggressive in our position" on government funding of education, add-

ing that that will more certainly be felt in the nation's and state's capitals in the near future.

This year's conference, hosted for the first time by the Livonia PTA Council, had one of the largest attendances in recent PTA convention history, said Livonia conference chairman Beverly Wessner. It also received rave reviews for its organization, particularly its offering of workshop topics.

IN ADDITION to financial concerns, the topics included "Adolescent Sexuality," "Teen Alcohol and Drug Use," and "Child of the Single Parent." Other topics included "How to be Effective with Legislators," "Civics and Your Local Schools," "Computers in Education" and "Law Related Education."

Key statewide offices were also filled last weekend by Detroit area PTA members. Elected president of the Michigan PTA was Jackie Palmer of Clawson. The new vice president is Francine Anderson of Pontiac.

Other actions taken by the member-

ship signaled growing organized interest in urging school and government officials to take action on such areas as video arcades, juvenile crime, handicapped access to community government buildings and inadequacies in the state school fire code. Resolutions in all areas were approved.

But the questions of dealing with declining education dollars and dwindling school enrollments were among the most talked about issues among individual delegates.

Ro Schilke, a delegate from Rochester and PTA Council president there, viewed the gathering as an opportunity to learn how other districts had dealt with the complex issue of closing schools, particularly in light of her community's first involvement with the closing of its first two elementary schools this year. She said discussions with delegates from Livonia and Berkeley, where massive school closings have taken place, were especially helpful.

Dennis Semrau, a delegate from Lansing Public Schools, where eight elementary schools and one middle school will have been closed by the end of 1984, also said he was surprised to learn in an opening statement by Livonia Public Schools superintendent George Garver that Livonia closed 22 schools.

AMONG WORKSHOP topics, he was most impressed by a presentation of classroom law instruction for students. Three Livonia teachers participated in

that workshop, discussing such matters as wills, deeds, student rights, contracts and rental agreements.

"It was very practical," Semrau said. "Even some of the parents there said they would have liked to have taken that class."

Meanwhile, Eva Williams, a first-time delegate from Detroit, found there was much conversation focusing on schoolchildren skipping class to play in video arcades.

She noted other discussions on the PTA taking an active part in expanding the scope of parent block clubs, such as the "Helping Hand" program.

A number of awards and citations were made to outstanding local PTA chapters as well as school children involved in special school projects.

Livonia received two state awards. Barbara Williams, editor of the Adams Elementary School PTA newsletter, the Eagle, was awarded a plaque for the best local PTA newsletter in Michigan. The Hoover Elementary School PTA, with 470 members, was awarded a prize for the highest PTA membership in the state. Hoover has a student enrollment of 540.

During the three-day conference, the local district had a chance to display its facilities before visitors from across the state. Organized tours were provided to the district's Skill Center, the Career Center, Cass Elementary School's academically gifted and talented program and the food service center.

The Stevenson High School Jazz Band and the Bentley High School Choir also performed for the delegates.



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Robbery follows failed scam

A Southfield man, 25, who thwarted an attempt by a stranger to bilk him out of \$345, was robbed at gunpoint by the frustrated con artist.

The victim struck up a conversation with a man in a Farmington Hills bar about 4 p.m. Monday, according to Southfield police spokesman Steve Zultowski.

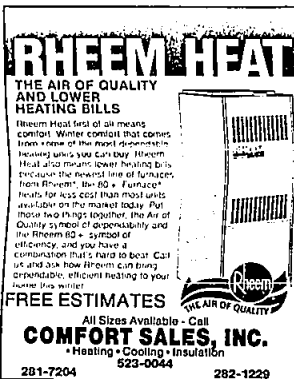
The man offered to sell the Southfield resident a video cassette recorder for \$345, and the man agreed. They arranged to meet at Tel-Twelve Mall. When they met, both men got into the victim's car, Zultowski said.

The would-be seller directed the would-be buyer to drive to Wellington Place condominium complex on 12 Mile west of Telegraph in Southfield.

According to Zultowski, the suspect asked the victim for the \$345 and said

he would go into his condo to get the recorder. When the victim refused to fall for the scam and said, "I'll go in with you," the "seller" pulled a small, nickel-plated revolver and grabbed the money, Zultowski said.

The suspect was last seen running north through the complex.



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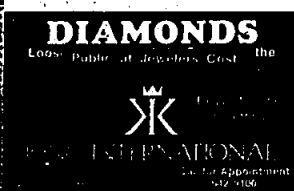
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