

OBSERVATION POINT

Another Graduation Story In The Suburbs



By PHILIP H. POWER
Publisher

Long gowns. Proud parents and nervous kids. Speeches and honor awards. Solemn music and then rock at the proms.

It's been graduation time here in the suburbs. It's a time we all know and love.

But while all this was happening, there was another graduation.

Eugene L. Moses, 67, of 35553 809th in Westland, graduated from Wayne County Community College last Saturday at 2 p.m.

He was one of nine WCCC graduates, and his story is important for us in the suburbs.

MR. MOSES was born in 1903. He started his career as a teacher, then worked at a bank while he was starting on a law degree in night school.

Then the depression hit, and Moses lost his job when the bank closed. He took temporary jobs until he finally got a post at Wayne County General Hospital that lasted for 30 years.

He retired. It seemed as though his life was closed.

But there was still a chance—a chance for him to continue the education he had started so long ago.

He enrolled in the first classes held by Wayne County Community College.

It wasn't too expensive—only

\$9 per credit hour. And the classes were held only a mile and a half from his home at John Glenn High School in Westland.

Moses plans either to attend Eastern Michigan University or do further work at WCCC. In either case, he will continue his education.

MOST PEOPLE know vaguely about Wayne County Community College.

It was started in 1966, in response to the realization that despite the good work in this area by Schoolcraft and Oakland community colleges, much of Wayne County was not served by any kind of community college—in fact, the county at that time was the largest urban area in the nation without a coordinated community college.

In this area, the Wayne County Community College district covers Redford Township and that part of Westland within the Wayne school district. It also covers Detroit and much of the east side.

People from any area, however, can enroll in the college.

Right now, there are 9,000 students enrolled, being taught by around 700 part-time faculty members. There are 28 teaching centers, mostly using space vacant for night classes. In this

area, in addition to the center in Westland, there is one at Marshall Junior High School in South Redford, and another at Riverside High School in north Dearborn Heights.

DESPITE THE GREAT importance of WCCC, the voters in the millage district have failed to show much support for the college. A 1.5 mill proposal was turned down in 1966, and a 2.5 mill levy was rejected two years ago.

It's clear that this college is needed, not only for people like Eugene L. Moses but also for the thousands of kids who graduate from high school this year and who can't get into another college but who need added training.

Now it turns out that the State Legislature, in thinking about aid to community colleges, is asking Wayne County voters to show some support for the college. The legislature is saying that unless the voters pass a one-mill local levy, it will cut state aid to WCCC.

If the county votes for the levy in an election scheduled for Aug. 4, the state could put in \$2.7 million; if the levy passes, the college would get an additional \$8.4 million.

WORKING WITH little

money, no physical facilities and part time teachers, Wayne County Community College has done a terrific job filling the educational gap in this area. Enrollment next year is expected to be around 14,000 students, and if that isn't heavy demand I don't know what is!

So on Aug. 4, I hope that the voters will remember that education doesn't stop with graduation from high school and recognize their responsibilities to put up or shut up about Wayne County Community College.

Leonard Poger writes

Signs Of Politicians

A Westland city councilman has an idea to help beautify America—at least the Westland community.

Councilman Russell Tuttle recently proposed a new ordinance amendment which would prohibit all outdoor political signs. Some suburban communities have already done this, and every year there are public complaints about the signs.

Tuttle's feelings about keeping the landscape from being cluttered with unattractive political signs during a campaign—and for several months afterwards—were not shared by two other councilmen who sat with Tuttle on a special committee to study the issue.

The proposal does deserve a little more study in an effort to take advantage of the current political fad to promote the environment at least the aesthetic aspect of it.

TUTTLE'S POINT is shared by many residents of Observerland who are forced to look at dozens of political signs posted in a vacant field at a busy intersection during the political season.

The scene lasts for several months before the election, but the signs do not come down the day after an election.

In fact, the signs are usually up for several months AFTER the election and in some cases, a year or two.

A classic example of this was seen in Westland two years ago when a billboard for Congressman William Ford was left untouched from the 1966 congressional campaign.

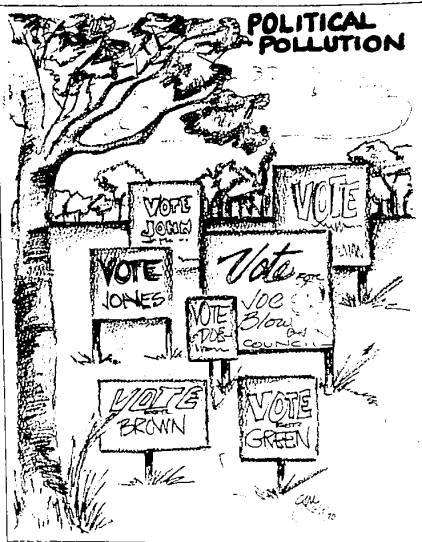
"The proliferation of signs in Westland every summer does little to make our city attractive and indeed, makes it look shabby and tawdry," Tuttle feels. His comment makes a strong point when viewed in the context of the community's current campaign to beautify and improve its appearance.

BUT TUTTLE'S colleagues on the special committee pointed out that banning political signs on private property "may be unconstitutional"—which may be the understatement of the year.

Courts have generally issued liberal opinions on cases involving freedom of speech and expression in political campaigns. There is no reason to feel that a court would ban a simple political sign from someone's front yard because it fails to beautify the neighborhood.

But there is a nation-wide feeling that something must be done to improve the aesthetic environment as it relates to billboards and signs. State and federal governments have already passed laws limiting billboards and signs along freeways.

Extending that principle to local communities, city officials can ban signs within county road



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Signs Of Politicians

and city road right-of-ways—in fact Westland has already done just that for commercial signs.

An eyesore during political seasons is the vacant gas station or building which is virtually covered with political signs—obviously without the permission of the owner, usually a large corporation with out-of-town offices.

ANOTHER EYESORE is the collection of signs on a vacant field near a busy intersection. The property owner in those cases are usually real estate developers who have out-of-town offices.

A possible remedy is to require candidates or their representatives to require permission of property owners before placing signs on any parcel larger than a typical single-family home lot.

This should eliminate many eyesores during the political season.

Another way to clean up the countryside is to have signs removed from vacant buildings or

undeveloped lots within a short period after the election. This would prevent candidates from having their signs before the public's eye for more than one campaign year.

But city employees cannot set foot on private property without the owner's permission, so a legal problem would prevent that.

Political signs are also a pain in the pocketbook for the candidates.

Candidates are obligated to put up hundreds of signs because his opponent is doing it. In addition, as Tuttle has pointed out in the Westland problem, the signs cost a lot of money. It means that the candidate owes something to the campaign donor who pays for a large number of signs.

So the problem boils down to an issue which is prevalent to most environmental questions—private rights versus public rights—and it looks like political signs will continue to clutter up the countryside for some time to come.

They Ran It Well!

We doff our hats to the Livonia Recreation Department and the Livonia Optimists Club for the excellent manner in which the sixth annual Les Anders Memorial baseball tournament was conducted.

Imagine, if you can, a 20-team tournament made up of nothing but schoolboy athletes going the entire route without a major incident.

More than that, the semifinal and championship contests attracted crowds of more than 2,000 and there wasn't a hint of the usual jeering from the stands that

seems to go with baseball these days.

Credit for the well run operation belongs to Rec Director John Dufour and his chief aide in charge of the baseball programs, Bob Schwarz.

Schwarz, as tourney director, had the extremely difficult task of rearranging the schedule when six games were rained out. Thanks to the full cooperation of all coaches, the championship game was played on a Saturday night—just as it had been planned six weeks earlier.

A thank you for a job well done.

—R. T. Thompson

Tim Richard writes

Boswell's Vacant Seat

In a city council I used to cover, whenever a member was absent for reasons of illness, business or vacation, the other members made a formal motion to excuse him.

The reason, I later found out, was that the city charter stipulated that a councilman who was absent for four consecutive meetings without being excused would be deemed to have vacated his office. The other six members would then appoint a replacement.

It's too bad the Schoolcraft College board has no such charter or board rule or law under which to operate. If it did, it could appoint someone to replace James Boswell.

BOSWELL WAS ABSENT from the board's last meeting late in May. He was absent from the April meetings. The last time he showed up was in March, when he

stuck around for only four minutes. Chances are he'll be absent from the June meeting.

The board has tried to bring James Boswell back into the fold. Chairman John Moehle has sent him registered mail. Boswell, however, has not had the courtesy to reply.

It is impossible to telephone him. He has an unlisted number. Not only will he not divulge that number to the press corps, but he won't even give it to his fellow trustees or the board chairman.

On past occasions, we are reliably informed, Boswell hasn't hesitated to phone a board chairman about something that was bothering him and talk for a long, long time.

But no one can call him back. Thus, the telephone, instead of being an instrument of communication, in Boswell's hands becomes a weapon.

THE LAST TIME Boswell walked out of a meeting, he declared the board's apportionment of seats violated the U.S. Constitution by failing to meet "one man, one vote" standards. On that point we agreed with him.

Boswell indicated he wouldn't return until the board was properly apportioned and declared he would file some kind of lawsuit.

He has failed to file such a suit. Thus, he has not only behaved childishly in stalking out of a meeting after four minutes at a time, but he has been a moral failure in not starting the court action as he vowed.

The extremely bad part is that Boswell represents the Livonia School District, which has half the population of the Schoolcraft College District. Half the people in the district may justifiably point a finger at James Boswell and say: "You are letting us down."

BOSWELL IS LETTING down the board, too. The board has eight members and needs five favorable votes to pass anything. One member has been ill lately, leaving only six votes. If another member should become ill, go on vacation or be out of town on business, the board would be hard put to find the five votes it needs on anything remotely controversial.

Boswell has failed the students, too. On the issue of giving the student body an advisory seat on the board, the vote was 4-2. If Boswell had attended, the vote would likely have been 5-2, and the proposal would have carried.

You can respect a guy who honestly disagrees with you, but how can a student respect a college trustee who plainly fails to do his job?

What personal problems James Boswell may have we don't know. The point rather, is that he would do Livonia School District, the Schoolcraft board, the faculty and students a gigantic favor if he would have the courtesy to write a de jure letter of resignation from a seat that is in fact vacant.

Recalls are such messy things.

The Future Leaders Lost All Their Smarts

EDITOR'S NOTE: The writer is an American soldier serving with the 75th Rangers, 4th Infantry Division in Vietnam. This is extracted from a letter to his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Michael O'Conner of 34003 Burton Lane, Livonia.

By MIKE O'CONNOR
Soldier from Livonia
The President sent us into Cambodia in a bold move to buy time to buy into the A.R.V.N. forces. We went in and did a job. There were some who did not want to go, but with the exception of a few who reacted much the same as the protesters, they went in and did their job.

MOST SOLDIERS here agree that while the fighting in Cambodia was worse because of the better equipment the enemy has there, the move was good because of the amount of supplies we captured and the number of lives it will save.

The thing that troubles me is the reaction of my country. At a time when a bold move was needed and Nixon made it, the students in America seemed to lose all the smarts that got them into the big schools.

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.

THIS WAR WILL be over for us soon, the A.R.V.N. will be able to handle themselves, and we can leave with heads held up high. We will have accomplished our goal of fighting until the A.R.V.N. could build an army. This will happen in the next year or two because of our strike into Cambodia.

It strikes me as ironic that President Nixon's finest move toward ending the war will cause his political defeat in the next election. Isn't it odd that the people he is trying to help attain peace should be the ones to turn on him?

Editorial & Opinion

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