

OBSERVATION POINT

DISSENT

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By PHILIP H. POWER
Publisher

Professionalization Is Coming Up For Police

Over the weekend, Detroit Police Commissioner Patrick V. Murphy made an announcement that is certain to play a major role in the development of professional police forces in this area.

Murphy announced that starting Sept. 1, 1973, all Detroit police officers below the rank of lieutenant must have completed at least one year of college work before they will be allowed to take examinations for promotion. After Sept. 1, 1976, the requirement will be two years of college work.

"Education is important," Murphy said, "because the police deal in human behavior and have to understand human behavior in the pluralistic society of today." He added that the move was made to "upgrade and professionalize" the department.

Most Observerland police chiefs whom I talked to liked the idea, although no one here has plans for a similar step.

ROBERT DEADMAN, Farmington's chief of public safety, said, "It's a good move, depending on the courses the men take. It will help professionalize police departments, and that's a very important step."

Deadman said that four or five of his 30-man force have had some college training. College work is not a current hiring requirement, but it is favorably looked upon, according to Deadman.

"I would rather have a man who has spent some time on the force take college work, rather than having him come on after he gets a degree," Deadman added. "There's still no substitute for experience on the job."

HERB STRALEY, Plymouth's chief of police, agrees.

"I think it's a very feasible approach to professionalizing the force," he says. "College education in police administration, as

well as other subjects relevant to an officer's duties, is the only way police departments can professionalize. It's very commendable."

Straley reports that college work is desirable for hiring into his department, and that he is currently revising minimum hiring standards for the Plymouth force. Pontiac and Flint, he reports, already require some college work before patrolmen are hired.

Of Plymouth's 15-man force, three or four have had some college work, and another three are currently enrolled at Schoolcraft College.

ROBERT TURNER, Livonia chief of police, agrees that the Detroit move is good, but with two reservations:

"First, why limit the requirements to promotions? It should also apply to hiring standards. Second, I think they should spec-

ify just which studies qualify for college work. Otherwise they could take basket weaving courses and get credit for it.

Turner reports that some 20% of his 109-man force has some college training.

Men who wish college training, from any area police department, can get tuition grants through the federal Safe Streets Act, passed last year. Police departments then try to arrange an officer's shift so he can attend classes conveniently.

SO, IT'S COMING. Professionalization of the police.

And it's long overdue. The police in our society are saddled with an immensely complicated job: protector, counselor, patroller, marriage adviser, juvenile authority. The list goes on and on.

It has always seemed silly to me that our society asks police-

men to do one of the most difficult jobs in the world, and then denies them the training (and the pay) to enable them to do that job effectively.

This is particularly true here in the suburbs, where the high educational levels and rapid growth of the communities make law enforcement problems subtle and complicated.

In the past, some people have called police officers "pigs." Having seen some of the ill-paid, ill-trained, ill-conditioned excuses for police officers in the South, I can't deny that the epithet doesn't sometimes apply.

But the best way to make it a lost word is for us all to applaud the move to professionalism in our police forces — add to provide our police departments the money they need to recruit and retain the kind of men needed to do one of the hardest jobs there is.

R.T. Thompson writes

No Time Like Right Now To Make Holiday Safe, Sane

There's no time like right now to make the annual plea for a safe and sane Fourth.

Especially this year when the holiday extends over a three-day period and there are more activities planned in all sections of Observerland than in several years.

Area police chiefs have issued their annual plea to motorists to take care on the highways. There'll be more traffic on Friday and Sunday than at any previous time of the year thus far.

That means there'll be the usual number of careless speeders, those who imbibe a bit more than they should and still insist on driving and the thousands of youngsters who will be crossing and recrossing roads in every community.

IT ISN'T ENOUGH that we have safety on the highways; we must have safety in the homes as well, where parents should take every step possible to keep youngsters from setting off fireworks that are so common at this particular holiday.

Sparklers can be dangerous, and fire chiefs in Observerland warn parents to keep them away from their kiddies. They point out that severe burns can be inflicted from the sparklers and in some cases clothing can become afire.

Fire crackers, always dangerous, are illegal and therefore should be shunned as if they were

poison. Too often we learn of youngsters holding firecrackers in their hand to impress their elders, only to learn that explosives can cause such things as ruining fingers, hands and sometimes arms.

With hot, humid weather predicted for the entire three days, there is a tendency to go for a swim in many of the ponds in the area. Especially is this true of the younger generation in the early and mid-teens.

THERE SEEMS to be some challenge in swimming in a pond that is posted against trespassing, which has no protection for swimmers and from which the local police and fire departments too often are called upon to come out with boats, grappling irons and skin divers to locate a victim.

It's too late then to heed the warning against swimming in these ponds. There are numerous public pools in Observerland that have life guards and every possible means of protection—if you have to go swimming, go somewhere that has guards.

The many fireworks exhibitions in the area pose another major problem, especially Saturday night when programs will be presented in many of our communities.

It seems that each is located along a busy thoroughfare where parents should keep their young-

sters close at hand and under control at all times.

The Plymouth Jaycees will present their annual exhibition Saturday night on the Little League Diamond on Plymouth Road opposite the Burroughs plant.

This means cars will be parked on one side of the highway and the fireworks will be set off across the road. Too often youngsters will take off for the ball diamonds to get a closer view and too often they dart across the street without looking for traffic approaching in both directions.

THERE'LL BE MORE than the usual attendance this year for the simple reason that the Detroit Race Course will not have its usual program on Saturday night. This means that Livonians will take their families to the Plymouth show or to that in Redford Township.

Tim Richard writes

A Damnable Situation

Ordinarily, it's a negative force that upsets the balance of nature.

For example, lamprey eels get into the Great Lakes, they decimate the lake trout population, the alewives that the lake trout feed on get out of control, and alewives' corpses stink up the beaches.

The culprit is something clearly bad—the lamprey—and our scientists can concentrate on eliminating it.

But what do you do when the culprit is something we ordinarily consider "good"?

CONSIDER the astonishing conclusion reached by the staff of the State Water Resources Commission last week: Chlorine is used in sewage treatment systems to kill bacteria, but that same chlorine will make the river receiving the outflow dangerous to fish.

Many miles of Michigan streams are barren of fish as a result, the WRC staff report said. The residual chlorine doesn't actually kill the fish, but it does cause the fish to move off to better water.

So we're damned if we don't

treat our sewage, and we're damned if we do. Either way, we do violence to our ecological environment. We upset the balance of nature.

"We're not presenting this to you with any idea of being a chlorination of waste water treatment," said Ralph Purdy, the WRC executive secretary. Clearly, chlorination is the lesser of two evils, and Purdy suggested that more research might show ways to use chlorine without harming fish.

THE MORALS are endless, but here are some of the more obvious:

Sense And Nonsense

Despite numerous reports of violence and confrontations with the police, Eastern Michigan University students are really all for law and order.

The only time they can't get along with them, it seems, is when they're trying to enforce the law.



Every so-called solution to a problem must be examined cautiously to discover its long-term implications and effects on the delicate environment we live in.

Cleaning up our environment isn't going to be done by sloganeering. It's not going to be accomplished by a children's march along the River Rouge to pick up junk. It's not going to be done by the simplistic device of "go sue a corporation," as suggested at last spring's college teach-ins. The environment is complex beyond belief, and our solutions may have to be as complex.

In the chlorinated water case, population size may be a factor. If the price we pay for treating sewage is the sterilization of some miles of river water so that it can't support fish, then the mere growth of our population will mean increasing water sterility. Even if all sewage is ultimately treated, the growing population will damage the environment.

In creating an industrial society, we got hold of a tiger by the tail, if you'll pardon the pastoral analogy.

Students sit on most planning committees of the college, run their own newspaper, and have equal voting power with the faculty and administrators on the College Council — the advisory body to the president.

At the board level, the student Senate is provided with an agenda (and package of background material and data pertaining to agenda items) well in advance of every meeting. Students, as well as other concerned parties, are invited to speak before and after the board sessions; as well as during the sessions on any items of interest to them. It is hard to imagine how communication could be more available.

THERE CAN BE NO question but that the student body has a special interest group with a direct stake in the decisions of the board of trustees. The stake is so substantial that the Attorney General has ruled that a student may not be a full voting member of a college governing board at the same time he is a member of the student body, for such double membership would constitute an illegal conflict of interest. Seating a student in a non-voting "advisory" capacity, while technically not illegal, raises in many minds the same question of propriety.

Other special interest groups at the college might just as properly be entitled to advisory seats on the board, once the precedent were set. These include the bargaining units of faculty, clerical, and maintenance employees, department heads and division chairmen, the college alumni association, and even major contractors and suppliers to the college.

All may argue correctly that they are substantially affected by decisions of the board of trustees and that their advice might from time to time be helpful to the board in making decisions. In fact, the college faculty bargaining team has already included such an advisory seat in its package of demands.

How any governing body, be it school board, city council, or legislature could function with representatives of special interest groups lobbying throughout all their meetings has not been explained.

THE FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION argument seems to me to be completely without merit. Tuition is charged, to help cover the cost of operating the college and is paid by the student in return for a given number of class hours of instruction — not for the right to participate in running the college.

This leaves the single spokesman argument. We have maximum communication when any student who is interested enough to attend board meetings is allowed to be heard. This is the policy now and should not be abandoned in favor of having a single student representative.

Editorial & Opinion

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