

Forget the cookies

State PTA lobbies for new image, more power

By James Radebaugh
staff writer

If one clear message came across at the state PTA convention in Troy last week it was that PTA members want to change their image.

No longer do they want to be seen as a benign group of mothers who bake cookies for after-school functions. The 800 delegates who converged on the Troy Hilton Hotel Thursday, Friday and Saturday talked about ways to increase their influence in their local communities, on school boards and in the state and federal governments.

Carl Cohen, a Birmingham resident and president of the Michigan Congress of Parents Teachers and Students — the formal name of the statewide umbrella organization of the various parent teacher associations — told delegates Friday that

to become more effective, local PTA members need to stand up and make themselves heard.

LOCAL PTA GROUPS need to learn to promote themselves by forging stronger ties with their business communities and keeping closer tabs on their boards of education, Cohen said. And they need to broaden their membership.

As to that, Cohen said PTA members will have to update their terminology to reflect an age when men are expected to be more involved in the activities that affect their children.

If Cohen could have his way the term room mother, used to describe those volunteers who help out where school staffs fall short, would be banished.

"You cut out 50 percent of your population when you say room mother," Cohen said. "I've never met a man who wants to be called a room mother."

The PTAs are also encouraging greater involvement by the students themselves. In fact, many PTAs have become PTASAs — parent, teacher, student associations.

Of the 800 delegates at the convention, 20 of them were junior high and high school youth delegates who served in the same capacity as the adult delegates and with equal voting power.

Livonia resident Ken Kalousek, a 16-year-old Churchill High School student whom the delegates elected student representative to the state PTA board for the 1989-90 school year, said he wants to see more students get involved in the PTA.

"IT'S NOT JUST for parents and teachers, and it's not just something that's stupid," he said. "You have to tell (students) that they can get involved and that they can make a difference."

The delegates began flexing their political clout Thursday by adopting resolutions to urge legislation in Lansing to require merchants to keep all tobacco products in areas not accessible to minors and to require parental approval on moped registration applications.

With PTA membership in Michigan exceeding 80,000 this year, the highest it's been since 1975, the organization has more clout to flex than ever, according to publicity chairman Darcy Kovach.

"That's a pretty strong voice when you go to Lansing and want something pushed," she said.



Michigan PTA President Carl Cohen, a Birmingham resident, told delegates at the PTA convention in Troy last week that they need to "change their atti-

tudes" and become more aggressive in promoting their concerns.

Racism conflicts targeted

By James Radebaugh
staff writer

What does a student feel when confronted with raw bigotry such as that scrawled on a locker or fliers recently posted at Groves High School in Birmingham?

Anger, hurt and shame are all likely responses, according to Dr. Norman McCrae, a Detroit Public School administrator who conducted a workshop on racism in public schools Saturday at the PTA convention in Troy.

"It depends on who you are and what you know," McCrae said in an interview last week. "Some kids might even laugh at

it because they're so secure."

Like any black American, McCrae has had his share of brushes with hatred and ignorance. The 63-year-old educator said incidents that happened long ago left scars on his soul.

But the years since he graduated from Saginaw High School in the early 1940s have taught him a sense of security, an understanding that bigotry is a sign of ignorance.

"TODAY IF SOMEBODY called me a nigger, I'd probably just laugh because it shows what they don't know," he said.

McCrae, who holds a doctorate in history from the University of Michigan and has taught elementary school, high school and college during his 35-year career, said that while there are many ways to deal with the problem communication is his approach.

"I want to share some things with people, give them some options for looking at the issue and trying to improve themselves, their schools and their communities," he said.

McCrae said he thinks methods of conflict resolution currently used in law and business should be tried in education.



Ken Kalousek, a 16-year-old student at Churchill High School in Livonia, was elected by convention delegates to serve as student representative to the state PTA board for 1989-90.

Schools won't insist on union shop contracts

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Unions have had a great impact on the lifestyle of this area.

"If trade unions wanted to make an issue out of it, they could."

There was virtually no discussion for or against the issue before the vote, but trustees said they had consulted with school attorney J. Kingsley Cotton.

"I think it's prudent to look at the bid you're doing, examine each bidder and make a decision. Price is not the only consideration," said Cotton, who added that he was comfortable with the board maintaining its current policy. "The school code grants the school board discretion in . . . awarding bids."

TRUSTEE HELEN Prutow said that time might be a consideration, since the district was working on an already tight schedule to build and open the elementary school by fall 1990.

"If it were changed, we would have to go through policy procedures,"



'My feeling is that southeast Michigan is a union area. The staff is represented by unions. Unions have had a great impact on the lifestyle of this area. If trade unions wanted to make an issue out of it, they could.'

— Jack Inch
school trustee

she said. Board policy changes include a review, a first reading, then an adoption. "I'm saying that's the way it is," she added.

The board is expected to receive and open bids for the new school project at a special meeting May 31.

Bids are expected to be awarded June 6.

The new school will be built on the south side of 11 Mile, just east of Halsted. Site plans for the facility were approved by the Farmington Hills Planning Commission in April.

Closed talks rile resident

Continued from Page 1

Schaeffer's property — could be used for a new 18-hole golf course. If so, a youth athletic park might be developed on some San Marino acreage. Development of cluster housing or condominiums on remaining San Marino acreage also might result, city officials said.

IF THE Selective property isn't acquired, the MDOT and Peltz property would be used as an active park for youth athletics, Sever said.

"I would say that the possibility of a golf course involving the Selective property, the Peltz property and the state property seems to be not feasible because of economics and devel-

opment problems (with the terrain)," Sever said.

School property at 11 Mile and Halsted also might be a possibility for expanding San Marino or using the property for an athletic park.

"What do we need a new golf course for? Why would we trade a golf course to a private developer? I don't like paying for anything twice, even golf courses," Flum said.

Flum is annoyed that Sever discussed parks development with Quaker Valley subdivision residents, asking them to keep it quiet. But the possible swap apparently was not discussed with residents near San Marino.

"Mr. Mayor arrested politics. He found it necessary to give good news

to residents about to get a golf course. But he didn't have the courtesy to go the residents near San Marino who might be living near condominiums," Flum said.

FLUM ALSO questions whether there will be an entrance off Howard Road to whatever San Marino is developed as. She suspects Drake Road was paved and realigned in anticipation of a nearby I-69 interchange. Howard Road, off an improved Drake, will be a nice entrance to a development at San Marino, she guessed.

But Costick denied that Drake was paved for any reason other than to improve the road because of the growing amount of traffic on it.

Bonelli to undergo mental tests

Anthony Joseph Bonelli will claim insanity as a defense against a first-degree murder charge he faces in connection with the death of 17-year-old Farmington Hills resident Kristina Marie Fracchia, according to assistant prosecutor Frederick Miller.

Defense attorney James Andary could not be reached for comment on the defense after Bonelli's arraignment Thursday in Oakland

County Circuit Court.

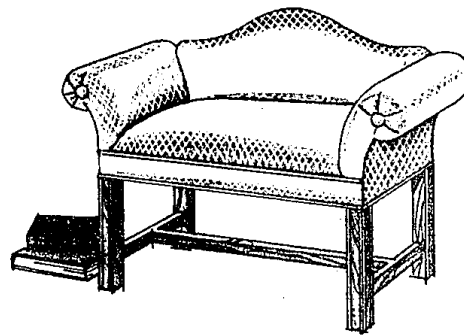
The next step is for Bonelli, also 17 and from Farmington Hills, to undergo testing to determine whether he's mentally competent to stand trial. The testing will be done before a trial date is set, Judge Alice Gilbert's clerk.

Bonelli was arrested March 17 by Orchard Lake police after Oakland County Drain Commission workers

discovered Fracchia's body floating face down near the north shore of Orchard Lake.

A not-guilty plea was entered for him when he was charged last month in 48th District Court, Bloomfield Township, on an open murder count. The charge was later upgraded to first degree murder, and Bonelli was bound over for trial in circuit court.

An autopsy showed Fracchia's death was caused by drowning.



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