



By Philip H. Power  
Publisher

## OBSERVATION POINT

# Roast Beef, Rhetoric, Relevancy Kick Off Primary Campaign

With Michigan's presidential primary election less than a month away, this weekend marked the opening of the sound and the fury of the campaign.

Michigan Democrats held their annual Jefferson-Jackson Day dinner Saturday night in Cobo Hall. A crowd of around 3,000, including many political figures and party workers from this area, ate roast beef and heard the three main contenders for the nomination - Senators Hubert Humphrey, George McGovern, and Edmund Muskie - take slashes at President Nixon and urge their own selection.

Meanwhile, almost literally back at the ranch, a crowd estimated at 10,000 showed up at the State Fairgrounds to hear Alabama Gov. George Wallace attack "ultra phony liberals" and argue that he has the best chance of beating President Nixon.

As I drove to Detroit to cover the Jefferson-Jackson thrash, I couldn't help thinking of a piece which appeared in the weekend edition of this newspaper.

It reported that a group of high school students from Farmington and Southfield had spent up to 12 hours a day for three days during their Easter vacation collecting 4,000 signatures on petitions against cross district bussing of school children.

While I listened to the rhetorical rhythms of the contenders, I couldn't get the idea of those 4,000 signatures out of my mind. The number may not be all that high, but you don't see nowadays many items in the papers about a bunch of high school kids getting 4,000 suburban signatures supporting bussing.

EACH OF THE presidential hopefuls who spoke here over the weekend tailored their remarks to their own individual groups of supporters.

Senator Muskie denounced the President's decision to bomb Hanoi and Hanoi as "a terrible failure of leadership on the part of the President." As the Senator from Maine has been in hot water with the anti-war movement, his comments got a big hand.

Senator Humphrey said he didn't like the bombing of North Vietnam either (and got applause from people who felt that, as part of the Johnson administration, Senator Humphrey was too hawkish.) He also made a big pitch against unemployment and said some things that sounded a lot like the protectionist theories of the 1920s. Given that his main support group in

Michigan is organized labor, that made sense, too.

Senator McGovern attacked something he called "the establishment center," which he blamed for the war in Vietnam, high taxes, unresponsive government and other assorted ills currently afflicting our nation. He did not go into a detailed definition of just what the establishment center might be, but since many of his supporters are on the outs with the regular Democratic party organization and therefore abhor all establishments (center or otherwise), his speech accomplished its purpose.

ALL OF THIS may have been very good. At least most of the people who attended the Jefferson-Jackson dinner went away looking as happy as it's reasonable to look after a three-hour political dinner with three major speeches, a flock of introductions, and the usual mysterious Cobo Hall food.

The candidates there talked about solid, sensible, important things: the war in Vietnam; unresponsive government; unemployment.

What they didn't do was turn anyone on, least of all anyone from the suburbs.

Why? Because while they were talking about solid, sensible, important issues, they were ignoring some of the things that really concern people living in the suburbs. Like high taxes. Like bussing. Like the future of the suburbs around the center city.

And out at the State Fairgrounds, George Wallace had a big, hopped up crowd in large part because he was talking about some of these things.

I happen to think that Wallace is basically an irresponsible southern politician, coming up here to a state not at all like Alabama, offering quick and dirty solutions to complex problems.

But what he is doing is talking about issues that are vitally important to people living in the suburbs.

That's what the other candidates are not doing much, and that's what they've got to do if they're going to run well in the suburbs come May 16.



Tim Richard writes

## Lake Kenwood Club Has Popular Appeal

When in the course of satirical events it becomes necessary for one irreverent old man to dissolve the social bands which have connected him with others and to assume among the powers of the earth a new allegiance to which the laws of nature and nature's God entitle him, a decent respect for the opinions of mankind requires him to declare the causes which impel that separation.

In plain American, I'm not renewing my membership in the Tonquish Creek Yacht Club, and I'm transferring my interest instead to the Lake Kenwood Surf and Turf Club.

NOT THAT I have anything personal against the TCYC or its commodore, attorney Robert Delaney, or his delightful first mate, Robert Dwyer, or my fine friends who bear cards with the name of the storm drain that flows underneath Plymouth and the Mayflower Hotel.

It's just that the Tonquish crew lost its vision.

The TCYC was begat as an anti-Establishment group largely rejected by the smug forces which give the City of Plymouth its (largely false)

colonial image. The only person specifically excluded from membership was Ralph Lorenz.

So, where was the TCYC's first commodore's ball held? Hah? In some obscure bar? On the banks of the creek itself - or even within sight of the Middle River Rouge?

No way. It was held in Ralph's Mayflower Meeting House. The crop of social life represented was at least a cut and a half above that of the Plymouth Symphony. And while the TCYC did stick to its charter requirement that at least 10 per cent of its members be of a minority race, the faces were almost entirely white. Not just plain white but a tanned, cologned white.

There's nothing wrong with

that. It simply wasn't my style.

THERE'S LITTLE danger, in my estimation, that the Lake Kenwood Surf and Turf Club will lose its vision, although it's theoretically possible.

"Lake Kenwood" is the appellation given to a gigantic puddle, a puddle even bigger than a certain former Farmington Township supervisor's ego, on what should be Kenwood Street, just west of Middle Belt and north of Eight Mile.

Wary of getting no governmental action, Commodore John Gabrys and Harbormaster Catherine Vignoe have decided to turn a scandalous eyesore into a community asset.

They are offering lakefront lots for sale. There is a contest

under way to decorate two former outhouses that are being converted into bathhouses, and it is hereby revealed that the contest judge will be none other than Glenn, art director and convivial cartoonist-in-residence of your hometown paper.

Victuals at the forthcoming LKS&TC bash will be hot dogs and beer.

Unemployment will be alleviated when lifeguards and tour guides are hired to walk the shores and display the shimmering brown waters. Supervisor Earl Teeples will probably be at the dedication ceremonies if the other six members of the township board don't concoct some screwy way to mess him up on this issue like they do on all the others.

## Local Progress

## Should Drop Property Tax

Various actions by suburban city officials during the past few weeks have again pointed up a couple of good reasons why the property taxes for the support of public services - particularly schools - should be dropped into an early grave. The property tax - at least for city services as far as today's argument goes - has been used, abused, and kicked in the head by officials who are forced into a bad situation.

FOR EXAMPLE, Westland Mayor Eugene McKinney put together his latest budget for the 1972-73 fiscal year and kept the tax rate at virtually the same level as the previous year.

But with the state equalization factor - a multiple applied against local assessments to bring the valuation up to 50 per cent of market value as required by the state constitution - there will be more tax dollars paid by businessmen and homeowners. If there were not one new

brick laid or building constructed during the past year, Westland's tax base would have been boosted nearly eight per cent.

WESTLAND'S neighbor to the west and north, the city of Plymouth, last week proposed a city budget with a tax boost of \$2 per \$1,000 of state equalized valuation. This is over and above what ever the state equalization factor increase is.

Obviously, Plymouth in a geographic sense, doesn't have sufficient land or room to grow to depend upon property taxes for a large part of its income. But Plymouth is forced to pay its employees in city hall, firemen and policemen almost as much - if not the same amount - given to Westland employees and officers.

BY KEEPING the cost per employee at a relatively high level, Plymouth is forced to go the only other route and avoid hiring as many employees as it might have otherwise.

Moving north and east, Farmington's city manager has proposed a new budget with a small tax increase (75 cents per \$1,000 of state equalized valuation) just to maintain the current level of services.

Taking a couple jumps south, Garden City officials have been practicing unofficial policy of freezing property assessments for new businesses and industries and others who make substantial additions to their concerns.

THESE assessment freezes - for a period of one to five years - tend to drive up the equalization factor for other property owners since the gap between the assessments made locally and the 50 per cent of market value required by law would be widened.

That familiar phrase "equal protection under the law" is being denied governments who are forced to rely on property taxes to pay for their local services.

## 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 JOHN BENNETT  
State Representative  
Redford Township

The March 8 issue of the Redford Observer carried an editorial by Tim Richard which contained some false and misleading statements. In the interest of good public policy and fair play, I am sure you will want your readers to have an accurate statement of the facts.

Richard criticized me for voting against the 50 per cent state income tax increase and more recently for voting against the gasoline tax increase. However, Richard fails to recognize that the 50 per cent income tax increase is yielding an additional \$320 million each year to the state treasury, and since this tax increase has been adopted, the Governor and his budgeteers have reduced the state school aid to our South Redford School District by several hundred thousands of dollars.

The financial records at the South Redford School District indicates that over the past five years State School Aid has been reduced by \$723,000. From \$1,584,000 in 1967 to \$861,000 in 1972.

THEREFORE, if we follow Richard the taxpayers of Redford Township will pay the increased state income tax and then pay for increased local millage to make up for the loss in state school aid.

Also, the taxpayers of Redford Township will be required to pay the increased gasoline taxes but they will not share in the distribution of those taxes. Therefore, it is difficult for me to understand why Richard thinks I should vote for a two cent per gallon tax increase. These taxes are shared 20 per cent for cities and villages, 34 per cent for counties and 44 per cent for the state highway department.

The so-called mass transportation package allocates a half cent to a discretionary fund which would be used for building a mass transportation system and the remaining one and half cents would be allocated to the cities, counties and the state highway department for the improvement of streets.

Over the past five years, I have introduced bills to get a nominal 4 per cent of the gas and weight taxes for the improvement of Township streets but the heavy handed lobbying efforts of the Michigan Municipal League, the State Highway Department and the Wayne County Road Commissioners defeated my bills.

It appears that Richard is telling the people of Redford Township that they should pay for increased gasoline taxes to improve the streets in the cities across the state. But the question that I would ask is: who is going to take care of the dirt streets in Redford Township?

Also, Richard is leading the people of Redford Township to believe that the gasoline tax increase will build a mass transit system. I believe the new gas tax increase will keep some high priced port-cochoppers on the payroll to draft some new plans but it will not build a mass transit system.

San Francisco is building a mass transit system and the cost will reach about 1.5 billion dollars before it is completed, but now Richard who writes an editorial column from an ivory tower in Livonia is telling the people that we can build it for a half cent gas tax increase.

Finally, Richard states that I voted against the open housing law and tried to gut the age of majority law. This statement is also false.

## Editorial & Opinion

OBSERVER NEWSPAPERS, INC.

Philip H. Power, Publisher

The Livonia Observer - The Redford Observer  
The Westland Observer - The Garden City Observer  
The Plymouth Mail & Observer - The Southfield News & Observer  
The Farmington Enterprise & Observer



Published by Observer Newspapers, Inc.  
38251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, Mich. 48150

Serving the communities of:  
Livonia, Plymouth, Plymouth Township, Canton Township, Farmington  
Farmington Township, Redford Township, Garden City, Westland,  
Southfield, Lathrup Village, Bingham Farms.