

# Observer Readers Speak Up on Current Issues

## 'Little League OK'

Editor:

As a volunteer worker of some years in Little League baseball, I wish to take issue with George Maskin on statements and opinions made in his column in the "Observer" on Sept. 2 and 9.

In the column dated Sept. 2 he stated that youngsters in the 12 and under age bracket shouldn't be competing on an organized level, and that local officials should do something about correcting an "unorganized Little League play." In his column of Sept. 9 he stated that while some 135 Little League teams existed in Livonia this summer, only three or four took care of boys who had reached their 17th birthday.

We have news for Mr. Maskin — there are NO Little League teams in Livonia. The title "Little League," or any combination of the words in the title of any organization, is protected by copyright, and may be used only by organizations chartered by "Little League, Inc.," Williamsport, Pa. This copyright has been upheld in past court actions, and will continue to be protected against violation by any other than regularly chartered Little Leagues.

Now that this year, 1964, President Johnson has signed the law (passed overwhelmingly by the U. S. House and Senate) granting a Federal Charter to Little League Baseball, it is necessary more than ever to defend its name and its principles.

We agree with Mr. Maskin that more should be done for the boys in older age groups, but we must point out that Little League encompasses a definite age grouping. We seek not to quarrel with any other youth athletic program. We do feel, however, that it is our right and our privilege to conduct our program without outside interference or unwarranted criticism.

We exercise the rights of parents, and of free men, to supplement the education of our children by state and church. This we feel is a God-given right, not to be taken lightly by those who use it or those who would criticize the users. We ask not "what our community can do for us, but what we can do for our community."

The three chartered Little Leagues in North Redford township have enjoyed the most amicable and cooperative relationship with the officers of the township, the Redford Union Board of Education and

the Parks and Recreation Department. We have not requested, nor needed, subsidization by the Recreation Department for the additional taxation to support our program.

We are justifiably proud that we have enough parents (some of whom do not have children participating in the program) who are willing to work and to raise the necessary money for personal glory or aggrandizement, but for the good of their community and its children.

Mr. Maskin is worried, not about the physical harm done to the boys, but insinuates that competition at this age level may disturb them mentally. Maybe he never experienced the mental competition of kindergarten and grade school? We wonder what the strain of a spelling-bee, a soap-box derby, or even a game of tidewater must do to the uncompetitive mind of a child? Let's face the facts, Mr. Maskin, from the moment we take our first breath of polluted earthy oxygen we are in competition. At the first step of our pink little bottoms we will our defiance and would slap back if we had the strength and coordination to do it.

The first day of life, the first day of kindergarten, the first day of any important event in this life of ours is with a challenge, and continues all our days as competition. Boys especially thrive on competition — in our opinion it is far better to find that competition within rules made for their safety and under the supervision of interested adults.

Better than leaving them in a vacant lot, spotted with broken bottles and empty beer cans, arguing most of the time about whose turn it is to bat, and ending with a fight or Johnny going home with the only baseball at hand.

Little League teaches boys to play to win within the framework of set rules — it uses the medium of our national pastime to teach the principles of sportsmanship, fair play and tolerance. It teaches them that to lose with dignity is honorable, to win with graciousness is true humility.

Our managers and coaches are thought of as frustrated, second-rate amateur athletes or would-be Clegg Stencels or Leo Durochers. Take a closer look at the rosters of our high school and college teams, and see how many ex-Little Leaguers head the lists. Take a closer look at the new names appearing on the rolls of the Major League farm teams.

We do not claim the credit for all the boys' prowess or ability. Maybe we cannot take full credit for the boy's natural ability as an athlete, and perhaps we should not design to suggest that we helped them achieve muscular and mental

coordination earlier than normally would be expected.

But surely we can take a little pride in bringing to these boys an awareness of their abilities and capabilities, an interest in clean and fair competition, a respect for rules and for the authority of those whose job it is to enforce the rules.

An amateur is not necessarily a respect for rules and for the authority of those whose job it is to enforce the rules. A professional, the best performer may actually be the worst teacher.

As for the conduct of parent spectators at Little League games, why single them out? Has Mr. Maskin attended school football or basketball games, or does he wait for the phone to ring and then he hangs up? Has he sat in the bleachers at Tiger Stadium, or does he sit at home and watch the games on television?

Grow up, Mr. Maskin! It is the most natural thing in the world for a parent to think his or her child is the greatest gift ever given to a high school coach or a Little League manager.

Once in a while this enthusiasm goes beyond the realm of normalcy — this is the occasion that is reported at length. The fact that over one million boys, in more than 5,000 leagues, with over 200,000 volunteer adults, participated in approximately ten weeks of organized baseball games, five nights a week, resulted in only one serious injury, is ignored.

You are entitled to your personal opinion, Mr. Maskin, as are the guests on television programs, but perhaps you should ask the people who are more directly involved.

Jim Atchison, District Administrator for the Michigan 8th District Little League Baseball, has all kinds of statistics concerning the program. A survey of medical doctors and psychologists on the physical and mental effects of the Little League programs on youngsters of the age group involved is very interesting.

Let's report the facts, Mr. Maskin, and when we speak of Little League let's make sure that we are discussing the same organization, please.

RON LINFORD.

Plug for Hudson

Editor:

What kind of a man is Sam Hudson on the one just appointed to serve on the Schoolcraft College Board of Trustees? We know he belongs to the Rotary Club of Plymouth — a past president of that organization. We know he is a community leader in Plymouth . . . but, what kind?

Here is something he said April 21, 1963 that will give us an idea of the nature of this man: "One of the things I noticed about men and women find it difficult, if not impossible, to be proud of a community primarily motivated by an interest in the material things of life. Material things are necessary, of course, and are not bad in themselves; but a community whose people are chiefly concerned with acquiring material things — a community that neglects those arts which help to feed man's spiritual nature — is not the sort of community which attracts — or which holds — those people who give any thought at all to the deeper meanings of life. The mature, reflective person has aspiration which are above and beyond the satisfaction of his physical well-being."

I have also learned that the thing which keeps a community from coming apart at the seams is not its constitution or charter, nor its laws or its policemen, and not the logic provided by the leaders of the civic body. A community is held together by the ideals of its citizens. The image a community presents to the world is a reflection of the amount of energy its inhabitants are willing to expend in preserving the values they consider to be important. A vigorous community expresses itself in its work — not in what its people say they are going to do, but what they actually get done."

He was talking about the Plymouth Symphony. Its indeed gratifying to know that we have this kind of leadership at the Schoolcraft Community College level.

H. O. Johnson

Praises School News

Editor:

Once again this year you have shown your great interest in education in the city of Livonia by your complete coverage of school calendar bus schedules and facilities in the various schools.

The parents and people who are interested in education are grateful for the coverage that has been given in the past. We know that this will continue.

Tyler School parents were happy to have their school mentioned in one of your many articles as a school with a new addition.

Keep up the good work in this field, please.

SINCERELY,  
C. H. KAY, PRESIDENT  
TYLER P.T.A.,  
LIVONIA

## Thanks Livonia Police

Editor:

Recently our family had cause to call upon the services of the Livonia Police. We were grateful for the quick, conscientious, courteous care which we received. Livonia citizens have every reason to be thankful for the wonderful protection offered — with utmost respect — by the police officers of this city. We are proud, and content, because when we need help, we know it's there.

NAME WITHHELD  
ON REQUEST

## "Support Park Issue"

Editor:

I think everyone should consider and inform themselves of the issues on the bond proposal for the 200 acres for parks and open space planning. It is very important to our city.

Picture a city of all houses and industry. It can't happen here, oh yes, it can — the buildings are ready to build, build, and build here in Livonia, just

as soon as they get their plans ok'd. Really it will take but a couple more years, and we will be completely built up. In this all house city, property values will go down, our taxes will go up. We must build more schools for the children, more police and fire protection. Their own taxes will not be sufficient to build the schools, etc. Also how about sewers, we can build more and more trunk lines but now about the place where they dump in, that stays about the same, can't take all the increased water. When the land is replaced with building and paving, the earth loses its blotter action and we have more water. If we have a big rain will we have more flooded basements? The time is now to buy up some land even if we don't use it right now. It will still be public land and we don't have to go to Kensington Park for a nature hike, we can do it in our own city. And in a few years we will be able to fix up these parks. It's been proven one of

the motivating forces that attract people (incl. business) to one place over another is the availability of attractive recreation outlets. It will be easier to sell our homes and the open space will keep taxes down. The government is aware of decreased beauty and property values of cities with no open planning. They will match our funds 30 percent. With this money we can put in skating rinks, tennis equipment, etc., on the property we buy.

## Jewels Stolen

Thieves removed a window screen and pried open a bedroom window to gain admission to the home of Roy Retting, 32828 Vermont, Livonia, and stole \$18 in cash, two watches valued at \$70 and two diamond rings worth more than \$550, according to Livonia Police reports.

The old-fashioned genius thrived on compliments — today he's judged on his cash balance.

Our city looks better. Homes will sell better with open planning, but we have to act now.

Thank you,  
MRS. LAMB  
Livonia

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