

OBSERVER SPEAKS UP

Can Johnny Count?...

In the increasingly technological society in which we live, the subject of mathematics is growing increasingly important. To meet the demands of our society, revolutionary changes have been made in the methods of teaching of this subject. These changes are under way in suburbia as elsewhere.

G. V. Harrison, Superintendent of the Farmington Public Schools, writing in the Dec. 30 issue of the Observer, stated that "the elementary staff and administration has continued the study of modern mathematics in 1964."

To teach modern mathematics, a more highly trained teacher is needed. In the past year, according to Harrison, "some 100 teachers enrolled in a formal college level class staged in Farmington by Dr. David Wells, director of mathematics, Oakland County Board of Education. Our objective is a well-trained teaching staff in the new math before we launch the program in the classroom."

Are these contemplated changes in method all to the good? Prof. Max Beberman, of the University of Illinois, one of the vintners of the new mathematics, thinks maybe not. Speaking before the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, in Montreal, on Dec. 30, he warned against the overly hasty and unwise changes in the mathematics curriculum in elementary schools of the United States.

We're in danger of raising a generation of kids who can't do computational arithmetic.

Excessive and unskilled emphasis, he said, are being placed on esoteric branches of mathematics at the expense of fundamentals.

According to Prof. Beberman, the new math has had many very unfortunate results. New curriculums have been introduced without proper attention to essential pedagogical principles or to the need for relating mathematics to the real world, as well as relating it to the logical principles now receiving great emphasis.

Under the old system, said Beberman, parents could help their children, even if the teachers did a poor job. But the parents can't help now, because the symbolism is too forbidding. Even the elementary school teachers are frightened by the prospect of using esoteric mathematics.

Not that Beberman would go back to the old system of learning by rote, with little or no opportunity for students to appreciate the basic principles involved.

But, he concludes, "until pedagogical principles are better established, it is a criminal to push new programs in this field."

The Observer claims no expertise in the world of numbers. But, it feels, criticism may not apply to the system being developed in the suburbs.

But the importance of the subject, and Beberman's stature as a scholar, make his comments worthy of very serious thought.

ALLEN ROSENFELD

THE BEST OF PAUL CHANDLER

Recreation in Suburbia

(Editor's Note: Because so much interest in the suburbs is today focused on the issue of recreation and the need for parks, Paul Chandler's "Facts and Opinions" column of nearly eight years ago should stimulate some current thinking among residents. It appeared originally May 23, 1957, and The Observer strongly endorses its statements as having important validity today.)

By PAUL CHANDLER

Regular readers of this newspaper are familiar with our attitude about the need for providing more recreational facilities for the youth of our suburban communities. We believe it is a matter just about 100 times as urgent as the consideration it receives.

Invariably, when the budgets are put together, recreation is a vague item to which everyone pays lip service, but privately regards as the most expendable thing on the sheet.

In this issue we have a hot letter from one citizen who happens to live in Livonia; the need is identical in Redford Township about the lack of youth programs. She was brought to a boil by a story of a dozen Livonia youngsters being arrested for drinking in a park near Northville last week.

I wonder how many citizens saw another news story last week from Lansing which reported that 17.6 percent of the persons sent to state prisons in 1956 were UNDER 20 YEARS OF AGE!

Robert H. Scott, director of the youth division of the state's Correction Department, observes that "crime among youth is switching

from the low-income families to those that are well to do—it is becoming less confined to the 'other side of the tracks.' That trend checks out with some theories of Dr. Rabinovitch of Hawthorne Center, an expert on youth mental problems, who contends that the suburbs themselves are breeding delinquency.

We are hanging stubbornly on this theme in this newspaper with the hope that repetition will hammer the subject into the minds of taxpayers. There are no easy answers to the recreation problem, of course, but if our local officials can become desperately aware of a need, answers will come.

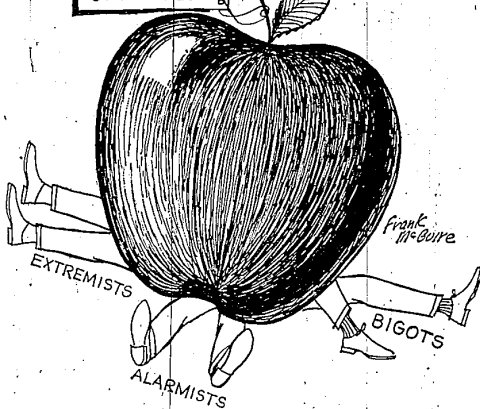
And at the same time we want to point out one undesirable situation which has helped to put handcuffs on a bigger and better recreation program so far.

The schools and the local government—in both Livonia and Redford Township—are working almost independently of each other in the field of recreation. There are vague areas of cooperation, to be sure, but the basic climate is one of distrust between the two elements, and hence, lack of coordinated effort.

It is absolutely folly to attempt to think of recreation as something that can be provided in two parts, with life unconnected sets of plans, in a community as young as ours where the schools are new and occupy such a large percentage of the total budget. If we have no other facilities yet, at least we have schools. We shall be waiting with a sensitive ear to the remarks of school board candidates on this most pressing subject; and, as always, we will continue to hope for a sweeping action from the elected city and township officials.

AN APPLE FOR THE TEACHER

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'READER SPEAKS UP'

Public Opinion Polls?

Editor:

In order to elicit information from the people that will provide a guide to government and school officials, I am suggesting to the editors of this newspaper the inclusion of a public opinion survey and reporting procedure. Within the context of public service, I can think of no better means for stating and clarifying local public problems than to invite the people to "Speak Out" on these issues.

In using this method, the newspaper will provide to the public a guideline for obtaining correct information pertaining to, for example, the acquisition of land for open space planning and recreation purposes; city charter amendment and/or revision, county home rule, etc.

If the residents and taxpayers of a community have no information or "thoughts" about a community problem or need, the news media can and should serve as an instrument of problem identification and education.

I contend that people are not apathetic or disinterested. I do contend, however, that people are uninformed and it behooves the press to rectify this situation.

The metropolitan daily papers serve a large geographical area and serve well. The suburban area newspapers should provide detailed news coverage of suburban area problems. The rapid growth and population increase brings forth this need so that the best direction can be given to the problems as they develop.

A survey instrument or poll reporting technique will serve as "a weather vane of public thinking" and provide the means to disseminate and clarify information, dispel rumors and conjecture about what may happen if and when... and point the way along "the yellow brick road" to better inter-community relations, suburban vitality and development.

READER:

Paper Thanked

As readers of your paper, know, the Universalist-Unitarian Church of Farmington has been carrying out an effort to supply the teen-age patients of North-

ville Hospital's Building E with many of the things that will make their lives more pleasant. They are in need of such simple things as make-up, shoe polish, stationery, handkerchiefs, headscarfs, hair rollers, and clothing that will fit.

The Observer read about our campaign in our Church paper, the Magnet, and publicized it around Christmas time.

As a result of that publicity, we have received three major donations: A 6th grade class in the Southfield-Ten Mile Elementary School bought the patients a transistor radio, make-up, hair spray, and many other needed items.

A Livonia woman, who was acquainted with a disc jockey, donated 200 new records.

This weekend, a woman from Plymouth, Mrs. Ludwig, contributed a large box of teen-age clothing.

These—all three of them the result of your publicity—have been the major contributions to our project.

PAAT HEUSNER,
Chairman,
Service Committee.

Praise for Firemen

(Editor's note: The following letter was sent to Redford Township Supervisor Jack McDonald.)

Dear Sir:

Until recently I was an assistant prosecuting attorney here in Wayne County and in that capacity I naturally came in contact with various law enforcement agencies including occasional contacts with the Detroit Fire Department Arson Squad. That being the job, I was not particularly concerned with the personal problem and as a result the work of the various agencies was pretty much taken for granted.

However, on Christmas night something happened to my family which I feel necessitates our attempt to show our deep gratitude owed your outstanding Fire and Police Departments.

My family was visiting my parents, Mr. and Mrs. F. M. Harris, of 14342 Lewis, Redford Township, for Christmas. About 6:30 p.m. we put our youngest son, Paul, to bed. About 10:30 p.m. we were getting ready to go home and my wife went in the bedroom to get Patrick up when she discovered him in an unconscious state.

The Fire Department and Police Department were summoned by my father. Immediately, Patrolman Brody arrived and a couple of steps behind him were Sergeant Arthur Reicha and Firefighter James Dorn of the Rescue Squad.

We left immediately for Redford Community Hospital with Firefighter Dorn driving and Sergeant Reicha operating the oxygen pressure regulator.

While enroute, I am told about five other scout cars responded to my parents' home. Needless to say, through the united efforts of the Redford Township Police and Fire Department and the medical staff at the Hospital, everything is fine now.

Had it not been for the outstanding service rendered by both the Fire and Police De-

partments of your community, particularly Sergeant Arthur Reicha, Firefighter James Dorn, and Patrolman Brody to name a few, this letter might be a different story.

All I can do is offer our thanks to you and your community for maintaining such outstanding services and employing such extremely skilled public servants.

With all the adverse publicity public servants get these days, I wish to take this opportunity to ask you to convey our appreciation to those responsible for their assistance.

Very truly yours,
FRED L. HARRIS

Traffic Light Helps

Editor:

City Fathers well done! The installation of the light south of Grand River on Farmington does indeed provide the answer to the hazardous conditions that prevail at Powers and Grand River in Farmington.

Please explain the logic of existing conditions that maintain and destroy the potential shoppers and future citizens that is America for the experience of the commercial value of the second signal in a one-block area controlling flow of traffic on Farmington Road.

Would not the prohibition of left turns at the intersection have sufficed for the time being?

Believe me, I use the controlled intersections for the convenience as well as the safety provisions it provides. The negotiating of a block of two to approach the intersection against the inconvenience and danger of a left hand turn seems far more logical to this feminine mind than the continuing hazard of that murder trap that is legally known as Powers-Grand River intersection.

PARENT-CHAUFFEUR AND MOTHER-STOCKMAN

All those in favor of logical reasoning—a four-cent post card to City Hall please.

Scouts Stress Safety

Demonstration of fire safety will be featured at the January meeting of Cub Pack 160, Friday, Jan. 15, at the Ten Mile School at 7:30 p.m. All boys between eight and 11 and their parents are invited. Awards will be given to boys completing their achievements and projects, exhibits of crafts and refreshments.

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Observing The Scene

11th Grade Teacher American Heroine In Truth Battle

By MYRA CHANDLER

The walls of the World are coming down. People who have never done so before, are talking to each other, searching for understanding.

We stub our toe now and again, but morality is on the march in this country.

Perhaps it is because we are more affluent than ever, and simply making money isn't satisfying enough anymore.

Every day across the desk comes the news of new groups organizing to help others less fortunate somewhere — people ARE rearing morally.

Hate and greed are going out of style; maybe because these twins breed destruction. Since the world now has the power to destroy itself — the pendulum is swinging the other way. Once you get people talking to each other, they stop shooting and solutions can be found to insurmountable problems.

Although many of us have put our prejudices in mothballs with wood stoves and high button shoes, there are those who will resist change.

Call them anything you want except conservative. These Birchminded people are not conservative; they are outdated and out of tune with the world. Unfortunately they are active, forceful, and at war against progress. In any war heroes and heroines emerge.

In my opinion a heroine emerged on the local scene just recently.

In November, two sets of parents appeared before the South Redford School Board with a statement complaining about the method of teaching of an 11th grade teacher at Thurston High School. Both sets of parents were from the same neighborhood. One set attended John Birch Society meetings.

This is their right. It is also their right to be free to complain and take the matter up with the local school board—which they did. They asked for an investigation of their charges. In proper order members of the South Redford School Board said they would investigate the charges, which they did in proper sequence with the help of an outside agency.

None of this is particularly dangerous — it probably happens often in the United States, particularly when a teacher knows the difference between mediocrity and excellence and tries a little harder to stimulate thinking in her classroom.

But what did happen could have been extremely dangerous.

This teacher was accused, judged, and found guilty on the front page, in headlines, of an infamous, smear tabloid the morning after the parents appeared at the Board meeting. "Gun-chewing, Wad-blowing Teachers Tell Pupils Allegiance Pledge 'Old Fashioned'" was one of the headlines and without quotes.

Fortunately, the paper is known for two things, character assassination and its limited circulation. Both were evident in the lack of impact the blow-up story had on the community.

Subsequently the investigators proved the teacher innocent. They issued this statement:

"Complaints against Mrs. Judy Lewis are unwarranted, unfounded and at complete disagreement with the facts. The alleged statements considered by the Board to have been taken out of context, misunderstood and misconstrued. If Mrs. Lewis is guilty of anything it is in motivating pupils to think."

Just for a moment, and it isn't easy, picture your name substituted for Mrs. Lewis—you are pursuing your work in a safe and snug American way. Out of nowhere comes a screaming headline accusing you of anti-American activities. Wouldn't your first instinct (after you had picked yourself off the floor) be to stop by for a pair of boxing gloves on the way to your attorney's office? The smear press relishes this kind of reaction and was probably profoundly distressed at the confidence displayed by Mrs. Lewis for not doing it.

Yes, Judy Lewis is the victor. It is because Mrs. Lewis and her husband kept a calm demeanor. They were told and urged to sue for libel by many people. But Mr. and Mrs. Lewis did not want to add dignity to the charge and had enough faith in the United States of America to know that justice does prevail.

This, John Birch members, is how you wave and respect the American flag.

Speaking of flag waving, a tremendous idea I'd like to see copied by other communities, has been established by the Farmington Junior Chamber of Commerce. As a club project they erect a flag pole in front of your place of business. On holidays and parade days they will raise the American flag on the pole. They purchase and maintain the flags for a nominal charge. Organizations like these show more respect in a minute for our way of life than the Birch Society could ever do by its daily searching under every intelligent pair of eyes for an un-American.

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6X22	\$2.40	6X23	\$2.40	6X24	\$2.40
6X25	\$2.40	6X26	\$2.40	6X27	\$2.40
6X28	\$2.40	6X29	\$2.40	6X30	\$2.40
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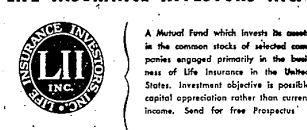
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