

Conformity and Lack of It The Problem... What's the Answer?



THE FRATS... good grades be damned, let's find some action, something different—a new thrill.

There is something going on today that is called the "grasses vs. frats" and to the uninformed, it sounds like some kind of disease. There have been accounts of this malady in a leading Detroit paper, a popular radio station is staging a contest between the two sides, and not only is this lowering the standards of the radio, but it is insulting to the intelligence of anyone who listens to this drivel.

Perhaps "grasses vs. frats" is a disease, a disease of the worst kind. The type of disease that rots and corrodes any normal mind.

The real question that is being asked isn't which is better, the "frats" or the "grasses", but why is there the need for this classification? Are we such an insecure generation that we merely turn our mother's apron strings into a Madras blouse or skinny pants?

"Frats" and "grasses" have more in common than they would like to admit. Both groups have never found their own identity, they cannot be themselves because they do not know who they are;



THE FRATS... Conformists too, follow the leader—the social ladder, that is.

so they must identify with a group, whether it be the "frats" or the "grasses". Both groups are strongly against whoever is not "in" or will not conform to the standards set by individual groups. The people that form these groups are not capable of being different because of a lack of self-confidence and they resent anyone that is.

But what happens to the people that, no matter how hard they are hammered at, do not fit into the pegholes? What about the people that don't want all Madras in India or a year's supply of eye shadow? These people that are different or individuals are crushed between two groups and labeled by society's cowards as "weirdos".

Now we have three groups: frats, grasses, and weirdos. The first two groups are entered voluntarily, but the third group is a sad, sad story. The third label is thrown on someone carelessly, simply because that person does not comply to the "rules". Because someone does not have the "right" clothes he isn't fit to exist in today's society.

Upon registration at a high school, every student should not only list the general data, but he should also name the group ("frats" or "grasses") that he is affiliated with. If he chooses not to comply with this law of the high school social ladder, he should have his forehead immediately branded "weirdo".

This way of some abstract called individuality, because everyone will be branded or classified into one group. The quality of the group will not matter, the fact that there is a group for everyone will.

Reprint: See Lockwood, Editor Franklin High School Paper, The Packet

Sin And Our Young People

Your article on the controversy surrounding the use of Catcher in the Rye in Livonia's schools may have done a good many Catholics like myself a disservice in that the only negative review quoted was from a Catholic periodical. I feel compelled to call to your attention the fact that numerous Catholic periodicals, including America, (January 26, 1963) have given this book favorable reviews.

I would like to quote from an article in the Catholic Library Association Newsletter, Fall, 1963, written by Rev. Edward P. Kennedy, CSSR, entitled "Children's Books Are Not Enough."

"Today, with the paperback explosion and the weakening of parental authority, it is becoming more and more a question of teenagers reading in an underground furtive fashion with only their peers to help them evaluate a book, or reading with guidance and assistance from mature and wise teachers. The question, then, is not whether or not books such as Catcher in the Rye, The Lord of the Flies, The Power and the Glory or similar ones will be read by our young people, but rather whether or not they will be read with our guidance and help.

Our high schools must give our students an authentic experience. Pride and Prejudice and Typhoon are good novels and can still be taught, but if they are the only visions of life in literature presented to our students, the students may well decide that our schools and their actual lives have nothing in common. There must be some immediacy in the literature we take with them so that they can identify themselves with the characters, feel for them, learn from them, and the English class instead of providing new insight and understanding of themselves and of their world will only reflect a divorce between the classroom and the social and political realities of life. And as a result they never become readers of good literature.

We must admit, too, that the actual experience of most teenagers today is wider than that of our generation. Yet despite the

apparent sophistication of the generation we find that often their worldly wise impressions are shallow. By discussing a teenager like Holden Caulfield who despite his vocabulary and his man-about-town life is lonely, frightened, worried about others and compassionate towards them, they learn of adults who need to grow in maturity if they are to face the problems of life.

Sometimes the whole philosophy of life enshrined in a novel is different from or in direct opposition to our own. But this is true of the world in which our students live. By gaining this vicarious experience of their world, they gain insight, understanding and above all, a sense of reality about the world in which they live. Atheists, moral deviates, alcoholics, racists, are people, people of their world and perhaps, sooner than we might think, will be people of our experience. Whether or not they turn from these fellow humans in self-righteous condemnation or have compassion for them may largely depend on the vicarious experience they gain from reading worthwhile, mature novels."

If a parent wishes to keep his son or daughter completely unaware of the depravity of human nature, he would have to deny him access to the Bible, to many of the classics including Shakespeare, Homer and Chaucer, to the daily newspaper, the weekly news magazines, and many of the women's magazines as well. If such a situation is possible and all reference to sin is kept from a young person until he graduates from high school—what a reality of life is this person sheltered from the realities of life from infancy prepared to face the world as it really is!

In many instances the use of so-called "literary" works is vulgar rather than immoral. A mature parent should be able to see beyond the four-letter words in Catcher in the Rye to Holden's essential goodness and feel sympathy for him. Speaking as a teacher, a librarian, and a concerned parent, I should have had my own 17-year-old son been a member of the class in question.

High School Librarian

Oakland Republicans Show Way

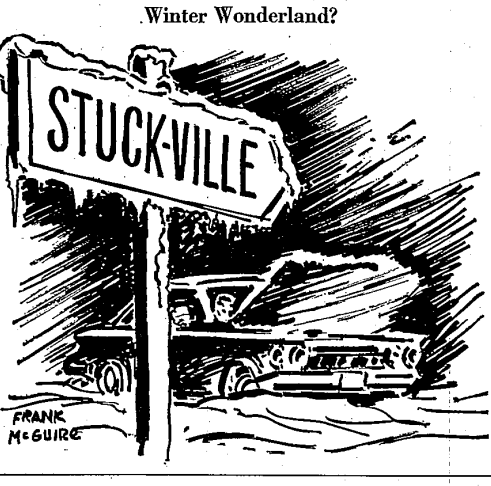
The recent issue of the Farmington area YMCA Newsletter carries the following quotation from the late Supreme Court Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes: "Hypocrisy and bigotry, racial animosities and intolerances are the deadly enemies of true democracy, more dangerous than any external force because they undermine the very foundations of democratic effort."

This elementary truth is gaining growing acceptance. The Republican Party of Oakland

County, this week, will hold a well planned, top level, human relations workshop, to which it has invited all major religious, ethnic, racial, and political groups, civic associations, political organizations and the general public.

The Republicans are to be heartily commended for this effort. Civil rights is a moral issue, not a political one. But it is most appropriate for the party of Lincoln to be concerned with it.

Allen Rosenfeld



Winter Wonderland? Reader Speaks Up: Answering Dr. Allen

Editor: Livonia Councilman Allen is doing a great disservice to this community, for his statements in the February 17, 1965 issue of the Observer are reprehensible.

He has declared his intentions "to war with the school system for the City's share of the taxes..." and in so doing he has launched an offensive that may very well destroy one of the finest school systems in the state. Allen's irresponsible statements attacked tax payers who have willingly approved school spending year after year to keep up with unusual population growth and rising costs.

In effect, he has hit out at every PTA, civic association and citizen group that has spent so much time and energy studying school needs and requesting even greater expenditures, not for selfish or political reasons, but to maintain quality education in Livonia.

Those of us who have taken sufficient interest in our school system to obtain the facts about school needs, to follow budget requests, and to work for the passage of bond issues, know and understand that quality education is not cheap. We also know that copies of school budgets are available to anyone who asks, and that yearly audits are published in the local newspaper for all interested persons to read.

Councilman Allen complains about school expenditures from 1954 to date, but he fails, neglects, or purposely refuses to enumerate the amazing value we have received for the dollars we have spent during the last ten years.

In the 1954-1955 school year we had 5,625 pupils in the school district, and today we have 27,800 pupils. Since 1954, we have built (or are building) 22 elementary schools, 5 junior high schools, and 2 high schools. It should be noted that out of 2 new high schools have been excellent examples of excellent structures constructed in an unusually reasonable cost. Our school district now employs 2100 people, utilizes 69 buses to transport 10,000 children back and forth to school each day and has assets totaling \$45,000,000.

In my opinion, the citizens of Livonia should be commended for their interest in quality education and for their willingness to provide 27,800 children with the training they deserve.

Yours truly, DONALD H. MURCH

About Dr. Allen! Editor: The article in last week's paper referring to Mayor Moelke's criticism of our city council's manner of disposing of their obligation in regard to Federal aid as part of the poverty program may have some food for thought.

If Dr. Allen was appointed by a legislative body (Livonia City Council) and as a part of this body with his views concerning such a program already known by the other members, I would like to know how broad a view the other citizens in the community will be granted in the proposed park. If you ask about a park in your overworked area, as I did, you will be told "Sorry, Too Late. The park has to get in our cars. So, instead, they buy useless land, pay top dollar and all the lots

where there are children playing. I question his own personal feelings and reasons for feeling that the City of Livonia couldn't use Federal funds for poverty cases or doesn't he realize that there are thousands and tens of thousands living in Livonia as well as poor people.

Laws were made for all people and Federal funds are granted to all communities in which there are needy cases. Thank you for your consideration. Now let's hear our city representatives' and Dr. Allen's reply or will be this another position of obligation in haste.

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Observing the Scene...

By MYRA CHANDLER

Why does it take death to drive home a point? Is this the only force we respect? • A child killed at a street corner to get a needed traffic light? • A family wiped out at a railroad crossing to get adequate crossing guards? • A fireman crippled for life to scrap antiquated equipment? • A sick boy hanging by his neck for five hours in a jail cell to point up the lack of proper facilities?

Part of the trouble perhaps is the fact that we all moved to our ticky-tacky houses in the suburbs with the same idea, LOW TAXES — but we want all the same services we left behind in the City — all, and better, if you please.

Thus, facilities lag behind—and in the case of juveniles, far, far behind.

For a long time I have been an admirer of Judge James Lincoln and sympathized with his plight of having to discipline kids and observed his discipline not followed through properly. He has long sounded the alarm for more juvenile counseling, rehabilitation, segregation of disciplinary cases.

On Feb. 18 a mentally disturbed 15-year-old named Dieter Michael Woffus hung himself in the Livonia jail. Two days later Judge Lincoln delivered a withering "accusation" against the Livonia Police Department for its handling of the case. The Department's image was badly damaged by the attack. Judge Lincoln did so, I believe, to arouse public interest in the plight of such troubled kids.

Maybe in his mind the end (if he succeeded in rousing the apathetic public) would justify the means.

On the other, and more serious, hand, when law officers start name calling among themselves, they dilute their entire image. [None benefit—not even the kid, because he is dead.

The Livonia police were guilty on two counts. They accommodated the aunt of the boy who was in the next jail cell. She visited the boys and brought them food. Also the Livonia police thought they could avoid an unnecessary trip downtown to the juvenile home as the Illinois police were supposedly on their way. Both errors in judgment, but not dishonest ones.

There is no doubt the story could have turned out differently. The tables could have been turned. The policeman could have been clobbered on the head by the poor sick boy and died. The boy apparently had this in his thoughts.

It is easy for armchair policemen to look upon the police as incompetent morons. But just for a moment, Walter Mitty, imagine yourself answering a police call. "Get to the bank—armed robber"—or an accident call where you must literally dig some people out of a back seat of a car. Not for you? Well, some body has to do it—and believe me the pay is not that good.

If we have honest men on our force; as citizens, I think, we are obligated to stand behind them—they are entitled to HONEST mistakes.

By the same standard, a dishonest policeman should be made to walk the plank—no matter who he knows. When police betray the public trust they must be an example—and swift—leave the scene...

Yesterday's Headlines

25 Years Ago Vol. 1 No. 2 of the Livonian carried a report of the Good-fellow annual pot-luck dinner and business meeting. During the meeting the Goodfellows collected over \$750 from paper of sales and parties. Nearly 100 people were aided with this money.

20 Years Ago Times certainly have changed. In the March 7, 1945 Livonian the new lunch prices were published. 75c for a week of lunches in grade school and \$1.40 a week for junior high kids.

15 Years Ago The Livonian of March 3, 1950, carried a report of a severe rainstorm collected over \$750 from paper of sales and parties. Nearly 100 people were aided with this money.

This action followed Gov. Williams' statement declaring a state of emergency in the state's coal supply. If the coal shortage remained there was a possibility of the Livonia schools closing. K. GUENTHER

Picture Talk by Les Wilson

QUICK AS QUICK Not long ago, one of my customers dropped in to tell me how much he enjoyed the KODAK Electric B Automatic camera he'd bought from me. Not wanting to miss an opportunity to learn something worthwhile, I asked him to tell me what he liked most about it. "I got a movie camera in the first place," he said, "so I could take pictures of the baby to send to my mother and mother. They live so far away, they don't get much chance to see him."

"Well," he went on, "you know how hard it is to get a baby to do something cute for you. Just about the time you're ready to give up, he does something. And that's just the time your camera needs winding or you've finished a roll of film. That doesn't happen with this camera. You never have to wind it and loading a fresh cartridge takes only a second or two."

So... if you want a camera that's quick as quick to use, try one of these KODAK Electric B Automatic Cameras. Not only is it ready to go in an instant, but just about anything it is automatic. An electric eye sets the lens opening for existing light. And the lens is pre-focused at the factory.

If you've never seen this camera, come in and let me show it to you. With winter outdoor and indoor picture-taking opportunities, you'll enjoy it right from the start. Shooting scenes of the kids, family skiing excursions, even a backyard bird-feeding station with lots of ornithological activity. And come Spring, you and the camera will both be ready at the drop of a cartridge to shoot anything that moves.

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