

In Our Opinion . . .

A Newspaper's Tradition— And How It Will Be Continued

By PHILIP H. POWER
Publisher

This issue marks the 27th anniversary of the Observer papers.

It also marks the end of the first month that I have been on the job, full time, as publisher.

Anniversaries are always a time for taking stock, to write a bit about the past, and glancing into the future.

It seems appropriate, therefore, to write a bit about the past of one newspaper, the Livonian Observer, and about the future of eight newspapers, the Observer Newspaper Group, of which the Enterprise is a part.

IF THERE has been one thing which characterized the papers in the past, it has been guts. Not fanciness. Not precision. Not razzle-dazzle. But plain, simple, straight guts and courage.

Courage means to have taken an unpopular or controversial editorial position and to have stuck to it.

To have had courage is to have had the imagination and the will power to have had a dream about a newspaper and about how it could prosper and become great.

To have had courage means to have dug out the unpleasant facts behind the bland sheen of local government. It means to have printed them, regardless of threats of retaliation, just to have made sure that the public was served with the only commodity a newspaper can sell in news stories or advertisements, the truth.

To have guts is tiring, lonely, sad. Sometimes it's a little disillusioning.

To those who write them (and hopefully, to some of those who read them) newspapers are alive, motivated by a spirit and a commitment, a posture in the world and an ethic. Without these, a newspaper is just another dead piece of paper with print on it.

It is only this spirit which permits a newspaper to play its true role: A public conscience.

These papers have tried to play this role in the past.

The spirit of courage which has motivated the paper will be, I pledge, the same spirit which will drive the group in the future.

LIVING UP to the standards of the past is not easy, but all of us will try. And we're going to try to go beyond

even the high standards already set.

We will try to bring to these newspapers an informed and probing curiosity about everything of local interest, from sewage to high school football, from racial discrimination to good recipes, from local politics to neighborhood goings on.

We will do this in a way that reflects a newspaperman's most deeply held ethic: That there is a difference between fact and opinion; that statements of fact belong in the news columns and expressions of opinion belong on the editorial page. News is news; no real newspaperman wants to slant it. If a newsman wants to express an opinion, he writes an editorial.

In short, we will run an accurate and fair newspaper.

We will work to make true every good newspaperman's dream: To put out the best paper in the country. We will do so with imagination and audacity. We will try new ideas and experiments with new processes.

THESE NEWSPAPERS, of course, will take an interest in politics because politics is a vital part of our public life, where decisions that affect us all are made. In this connection, I believe that a personal note is needed to set the record quite clear.

As an individual, I am a Democrat. As a publisher, I am a newspaperman. Since I joined The Observer Newspaper Group, many people have wondered, some out loud, if the fact that I am a Democrat who happens to publish some newspapers would automatically make those newspapers into slanted, Democratic sheets.

I will not.

When, as publisher, I feel the Democrats are being silly or stupid, I intend to say so in an editorial. I intend to do the same thing with the Republicans.

These newspapers will be run as newspapers, not as a vehicle for any one group, party, organization or individual.

For a newspaper must serve the public as a whole and not just one segment.

This, then, is our spirit and goal at The Observer Newspaper Group: To serve the public as a conscience and the people with the truth.

We look forward to the years ahead with a sense of excitement, and we invite you to join with us in the grand adventure of building a great newspaper.

Looking Back in the Files

5 Years Ago

FEBRUARY 15, 1962

Exchange Prexy
New officers and directors of the Farmington Exchange Club were installed last week with A. C. Gaines, Township Clerk, taking over the reins as president.

Lights Out
The Farmington Board of Education voted unanimously Monday night against a proposal for the lighting of the Farmington Senior High athletic field to permit a night football schedule and other outdoor nighttime activities and programs.

Community College
The Oakland County Board of Education has now endorsed a proposal for the formation of a county community college and is proceeding with a detailed study of the plan.

Kendallwood School
Community school residents are being reminded this week that February 28 is the final date for the final payment of school and county taxes without penalty. Kendallwood School

Tax Statements
The Oakland County Board of Education has now endorsed a proposal for the formation of a county community college and is proceeding with a detailed study of the plan.

Teacher in Print
Mr. Robert Benjamin, Farmington High art instructor, will publish a book on the history of Mackinac Island this spring.

Street Improvements

A survey of projected street improvements for the City of Farmington was filed with the State Highway Dept. earlier this month.

James Tenant, city manager, announced Tuesday.

Book Rental

New rental text books for sophomore English students are being rented for fifty cents this semester to save students the expense of buying another book.

Combined Departments

A proposed ordinance, providing for the integration of

dued by Rep. Hans C. Rasmussen and co-sponsors and co-starred and co-sponsored by Rep. Raymond L. Baker state representative for this district, is passed into law.

10 Years Ago

FEBRUARY 14, 1957

Fifth in County
In spite of a general decline in the number of new home building permits during 1956, Farmington Township continues to gain in residential population, it was announced Monday by Pierre Delmonier, chapter director.

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James Tenant, city manager, announced Tuesday.

Book Rental

Revised plans for the new elementary school to be constructed at the Kendallwood School site were approved by the School Board Monday night after a detailed study of the plans submitted by the architect.

Combined Departments

A proposed ordinance, providing for the integration of

city police and fire departments, has been drafted by Earl Scherfius, city manager, and will be presented to the City Council at its regular meeting next week.

15 Years Ago

FEBRUARY 14, 1952

March Successful
Over \$3,500 was collected during the March of Dimes drive conducted in the southwestern Oakland County Chapels.

Plans for the 1953 campaign were announced Monday by Pierre Delmonier, chapter director.

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To the Editor:

The Oakland County Road Commission wishes to thank the citizens of Oakland County for their patience and understanding during the past week.

It has been a trying time for everyone.

Everyone concerned

is frustrated by the snow

which has been

plowed out the minimum number of lanes on the expressways and main roads in a reasonably short time. But where were they during the remainder of the week?

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