

This Is the Week That...

By DON HOENSCHELL

It's harvest time for your legislator, folks, so watch that crazy old moon rising over the pasture and be kind when the political drummer comes calling with his wares.

Really!

Suburban voters have sent a good delegation to Lansing and its members deserve a listen. And summer and early fall are the only times they have two minutes to rub together.

The Governor's Special Commission on Legislative Compensation—a panel of prominent thinkers ranging from Gus Scholle to the University of Michigan's James Pollock—agreed (if you can believe THAT) that:

"Members in the legislature, if it is not a fulltime job, is a fulltime responsibility."

So summer and early fall are about the only times the legislature can really relate to the folks back home. If your guy is a junker, forget it. We're lucky in that respect here.

Legislators try through the winter and spring to let their districts know what's going on. The system falls on its face.

It's called newsletters.

Printers in the Legislative Service Bureau have gotten up to 300,000 newsletters a month—and legislators rarely see them. One exception is the crusty Rep. Frederic J. Marshall (R-Allen), a former sheriff and parttime iconoclast, who pulls up his trusty standard typewriter to his desk on the floor of the House and belts out his own ideas.

Others can call up a press agent hired by the House (both Republicans and Democrats) and order a handout, with mustard, mayonnaise or a bit of parsley.

And legislators gripe because the local newspapers do not carry them verbatim and the folks back home don't frame them and burn incense.

Often, a legislator will adapt a general handout of the Speaker's Office or the Minority Leader's Cubicle claiming pie in the sky is enroute through the courtesy of the party. They start:

"Rep. Joe Bleau today sponsored a bill designed to establish an authority to build three-car garages for everybody since his party was responsible for the economic health of the state."

The first three words are changed so everybody gets the same shake back home.

Legislators have complained that the Observers do not carry the text of these things.

They're right, we don't.

We think too much of our readers to peddle self-serving banalities that—if at all—appeared in the dailies last week.

So, get your legislator back home and welcome him. Ask about any bill that interests you. You'll get an articulate and well-considered response.

If not:

Write a letter to the press agents you hire with your tax money and cut out the middleman.

COMMUNITY TOGETHERNESS...



Our Kids Are Getting Older Much Sooner

Kids are maturing faster each year, but our laws on voting, delinquency, privileges and duties have remained frozen—so we've argued over the past few weeks.

Now comes a report from a pair of University of Michigan psychologists suggesting that perhaps we need more flexible labor laws allowing kids 10 to 16 to work a bit.

The traditional argument, unchanged and unexamined since Charles Dickens' day is that child labor means sweat shops, whips, nickel-a-day wages, unsanitary conditions.

Well, Dr. Mary Engel and Gerald Marsden, the U-M researchers, first of all found in a Boston study that 73 per cent of boys under 14 had already done some work for money outside the home, not just delivering papers or cutting lawns, but also shining shoes, pasting labels, stacking boxes, sweeping shops.

Many of the boys worked illegally, and so they were not counted in the labor census.

And the psychologists thought the work beneficial to the boys. It wasn't just money. In fact, the highest percentage of working boys wasn't in the lowest social class.

They found that the absence of a father in the home was a definite factor related to kids' working—even if the mother had an adequate income.

Why? Marsden speculated that a boy's work might replace what he misses in a father and provide him with needed authoritative contact with adult men and older boys.

(The Big Brother movement uses the same kind of argument in seeking recruits.)

The Marsden speculation ought to get some consideration from those concerned with the areas called "slum," ghetto, "disadvantaged" or whatever pet euphemism you prefer. In those areas, there are an awful lot of boys without fathers. Ironically, these are the kids who have the toughest times getting jobs once they are eligible to work legally.

Says Dr. Engel: "We found that at the age of 12 boys have definite work habits. It seems evident from our study that rehabili-

itation efforts through such programs as Job Corps should begin at an early age. By the time

a boy is 16, it is probably more difficult to change his attitude and work pattern."

OBSERVER NEWSPAPERS

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Wednesday, August 23, 1967

Thanks For Harmonicas

Editor:

"As public relations counsel for M. Hohner, Inc., the harmonica makers, we were delighted to read Tim Richard's interesting article 'Remember Your Harmonica Days'."

We very much appreciate the good wishes and are glad to tell you that the harmonica has been enjoying a most gratifying upsurge for the past several years, as it is being played by people of all ages from senior citizens down to children, which necessarily must include today's teenagers.

As we scan the clippings that come to us, it is quite clear that people across the nation, regardless of category, are finding joy in the little instrument that Hohner has made for the past 100 years.

Leo Miller Assoc.
Westport, Conn.

Most of those organizations like the Civic Betterment League and the Let's Do Something About Sin Club don't meet during the summer because of vacations. It's the honor system until fall, so watch it.

Like contests? Who was the last Michigan governor to sign a tax bill? The first correct answer wins a free all-expense trip to the water cooler.

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From the Publisher's Desk OBSERVATION POINT

By Philip H. Power

We dropped by the Farmington Founders Festival over the weekend and came away with a little better idea of why Overland is a nice place to live.

Happy kids eating cotton candy, trying to solve that age-old problem of how to get a good bite of it without getting goo all over your face.

People standing around, watching a roasting oxen on a spit, turning and turning and turning and turning...

Teenagers, mostly, egged on by a Barker, throwing balls to try to dunk a JC. Girl friends standing by, squealing at the splash.

People lined up for an old-fashioned dinner at the Masonic Temple building, saying hello to friends under the trees.

Most of all, the sense of space. It had that feeling of an old rural carnival, with trees and crickets and sky going on and on. It wasn't like a big, concrete city.

The Festival was started a few years ago to commemorate Farmington's foundation back in the early 19th century. It's become the big event in the community, mainly because (as one lady put it) "there are so many people that the whole thing couldn't fail to succeed."

It is this quality of bringing people together within their community that makes the Festival what it is and, in turn, makes Farmington a better place to live.

When the Detroit riots broke out, causing postponement of the Festival, some worried that this year's event would be a failure. But looking at the crowds over the weekend, it seemed that these fears were groundless.

Events such as the Farmington Founders Festival are not unique here.

Plymouth had its Centennial Celebration in July, and is gearing up for the annual Fall Festival right now. Westland celebrated its first birthday as a city earlier this year.

Making such events a success is not easy. It takes a lot of work, usually done by a lot of busy people.

But in bringing people in the community together, mindful of the past and hopeful for the future, they go a long way toward making our communities better places to live.

One wonders why we don't have more of them.

A Two-Party System Works Only As Well As The Two Parties Do

Soviet Russia isn't the only place with one-party elections.

Westland voters will experience that same feeling when they go to the polls Sept. 12 to "nominate" candidates for mayor, city council, and municipal judges in what has politely been termed a primary election.

However, for all practical purposes, the mayor's race will be decided on that date, and the four Democratic nominees will have only two Republicans to face in the November "run-off."

The two Democratic candidates for the two judgeships have the easier time of all the politicians this year—they have no opposition for the party nomination now for the position in the November "vote."

It seems like something close to scandal that in a community of 38,000 persons, of which 38,000 are adults, that no more than 22 people have the talents and interest and inclination to run for public office.

One Republican figure in the city commented, before the recent deadline for nominating petitions, that his party only wanted to run candidates where there is a reasonable chance of victory.

However, the fallacy in that thinking is that if he and the party wait too long, there may be an opposition party to challenge the party in power.

Good government is at its best when there is a constructive opposition to serve as a watchdog and act as part of the checks and balances system.

But now, it looks as though Westland may find that the watchdog is gone and the system is out of balance.

The Observer may not agree with everything in the Republican Party's philosophy (which also goes for the Democratic Party) but the alternate to "not running unless there is a chance of victory" removes the rhyme and reason for having elections.

This newspaper hopes that the Republican Party in Westland,

admittedly weak at the moment, accepts the challenge of the Sept. 12 primary fiasco and builds itself up to a party of effective-

ness—if for no other reason that to keep the party-in-power honest during election time.

—Leonard S. Poger

Will Destructive-Happy Teeners Step Forward?

It doesn't make much sense to us that a small group of teenagers in Plymouth would be so thoughtless to do things that hurt a large number of their group.

But apparently that's what has happened in the closing of The Chip, a teen recreation spot sponsored by the Plymouth "Y" for the better part of two years. Dances were held there on the weekends. There was activity geared for teenagers in the late afternoon and early evenings after classes at Plymouth High. It was a nice place to go for relaxation and fun.

Now it's all out the window because a few did their best to wreck the place. It was the result of their vandalism that forced the "Y" to temporarily close the doors.

There's some indication that the culprits are known but don't have enough gumption to step up and admit it. We feel it's

about time these vandals make themselves known and do everything possible to correct the situation.

Then The Chip can be opened again and become a teen center again.

Five will get you ten that the destructive teeners won't have enough guts to answer the challenge. They like to hurt and think it fun but they don't want to admit that they are wrong.

R. T. Thompson

Sense 'n Nonsense

It makes for more nonsense than sense to us that seldom in the negotiations between school boards and teachers and college boards and faculty members does the word increment come up except in kind of a passing manner.

We have always thought that additional money in the pocket constituted a raise in pay. Teachers and college instructors have a written-in raise known as an increment which usually ranges from \$300 up.

Yet when representatives of the school and college boards sit down for negotiations, it is taken as a matter of fact that salary increases are over and above increments. This oftentimes involves as much as an additional \$1,000 to \$1,500 per year, and that's a big boost in any man's language.

Perhaps we'll learn sometime why an (increment) increase in pay isn't considered as such. We always thought an additional amount in the pay envelope was a raise but apparently not in this case.

Who Pays?

Edward Kennedy, Treasurer
Redford Township.

Dear Ed:

We wonder why Redford Township officials didn't drop the penalty for late payment of water bills this month? We realize there is a note that bills must be paid by the 15th or a 10 per cent penalty will be charged.

However, there were pickets in front of the Township Hall on the 15th and the 16th and anyone acquainted with unions knows that a good union member won't cross a picket line even to pay a bill.

Pipefitter Pete

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