

Practice Is Over, The Game Starts

High School seniors in Overland will don their caps and gowns this week and next and, in most cases, listen to a lot of dry speeches from vice-presidents and deans from neighboring universities telling them that commencement "is just the first step" and a happy and full life lies before them.

Usually, these speeches are just a minor delay before the seniors take off in daddy's convertible and guzzle free coke at an all-night graduation party.

The commencement speeches themselves really carry no real meat and the seniors will not actually be led to any new pieces of guidance of how to live in America today.

As a distinct public service, The Observer Newspapers would like to deliver, in print, its own graduation address to the high school seniors, replacing the sterile words of college officials, who have a habit of failing to "not telling it like it is."

So, seniors, here it is.

THE PAST 12 YEARS of formal education have been something like an athletic team's practice session for the big ball game on Saturday afternoon.

As an assistant football coach at Wayne State University told this writer in years gone by, "I can tell my boys what to do at practice sessions Monday through Friday. But on Saturday afternoon, I have to sit on the sidelines and leave the game up to them."

Graduation is the end of the Friday night practice session and the life that begins the next day (or four years later for those seniors who will attend college). Their coaches (their parents and teachers) will have to sit on the

Ford Gets Financial Gain

Ford has a better idea when it comes to selling cars to police departments.

Although the company had nothing to do with the results at a recent Westland City Council meeting, it still turned out pretty good for the firm.

What happened was that the Westland council agreed to switch gears and have its policemen drive new Fords instead of the larger Pontiacs and Olds it has bought in the past year.

Actually, a statistical report from the police department showed that the larger cars were less costly to maintain and the larger wheelbase of the car made it safer for policemen in high-speed chases.

Although several councilmen found good reasons to abstain from voting on issues because of a possible conflict of interest, none bothered to abstain on the purchase of the Ford cars although two of the councilmen, Gene McKinney and Robert Wagner, owe their livelihood to Ford Motor Co. A third, Mrs. Justine Barnes, has a husband who works for Ford.

Technically, the three are not guilty of any financial gain on the police car purchase. But the principle of the matter is important, and it is hard to understand why they didn't abstain on the vote, especially since the purchase was approved by a unanimous vote of the seven-member council and their individual votes would not have affected the outcome of the issue.

—Leonard Poger

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WESTLAND CITY COUNCIL MEETING
JUNE 4, 1968
THE OBSERVER FROM PLYMOUTH, MICH.

From the Publisher's Desk OBSERVATION POINT

By Philip H. Power

To attend Democratic state conventions these days, you need three things: lots of time, a strong constitution, and a well-developed sense of humor.

Maybe the humor part is the most important.

There you are, sitting in a caucus which has already gone on for four hours, and people are having a nice little discussion (using samurai swords), about whether or not you can have more than two amendments to a main motion. The room is hot; cigar smoke (yes, Virginia, politicians do smoke cigars, even the modern ones) is making your eyes water; people are tired and sore.

Under these conditions, the only thing possible to retain sanity is to lean back and laugh at the absurdity of it all.

The need for time is obvious, as is the need for strength.

Beginning Friday afternoon, the Democrats assembled in various meetings and went on strong 'til 3 a.m. Saturday, got up to make 9 a.m. caucuses that morning, went on 'til 5:30 or so Sunday morning, and then gathered again for more meetings around 9:30 the same morning. The floor session started at 1:30 p.m., lasting to 9:30 that evening.

You need a strong constitution and a powerfully developed set of muscles in your backside to get

through something like that.

IT WAS 1:30 a.m. on Sunday, and we were sitting around in the Kennedy hospitality suite on the 24th floor, having a drink and jawing about this and that. It was late, and we were all suited up and appropriately hot and sticky when she walked in.

Leaving pajamas it was! In red and violet and yellow and some pink, I think. She looked like a butterfly settled on moist soil.

Her husband, who had a yellow turtle-neck under his sport coat, owns a drug store out in Livonia.

They talked for a while, and listened to us. Then they left, and

the room felt a little darker and not so nice.

TALKING, TALKING, TALKING was the order of the day.

Some of it was just long and over procedural points only. The 19th District, with numerous fights on its hands, took over three hours to resolve the seemingly simple problem of which alternate delegates to send and how to vote. Chairman Aldo Vagnozzi of Farmington was up there on the platform, coaxing, twisting, turning; trying to get agreement. Even his bubbling smile lost a little sheen as the evening went on, but he never blew his cool.



"CHAIRMAN ALDO VAGNOZZI of Farmington was up there on the platform, coaxing, twisting, turning; trying to get agreement. Seen here in the 19th District caucus late Saturday night are, (left to right): Rebecca Woods of Pontiac; Jerry Raymond, Livonia; Vagnozzi, and Paul Kedish of Livonia.

Some of the talk was blunt and to the point, especially out on the floor during the fights. That's when being at a microphone to make your point fast and hard can make the difference between winning and losing.

People know it, and that's why Bob Dwyer was standing there, nearly every time I went by, guarding the mike, feet solidly planted and his right hand fondly cradling the gleaming metal. Bob is from Plymouth, and he's chairman of the 2nd District, usually the most anarchic one in the state. He knew what he was doing.

SO MUCH LITTER. All over. At the start, all the hopeful little piles of literature and signs and buttons, neatly stacked, ready to be thrown into the fray.

It all goes so quickly, and then the piles are no more and people ask almost in anger if there is any more.

A fat man comes in weighing at least 300 pounds. He's puffing and you can see his head of sweat on his nose. He's got buttons from every candidate around on his heavy wool jacket, and he's sore there aren't any more big Kennedy buttons.

Then you walk away from the convention hall, at the very end, and it's all under your feet. The torn Humphrey sign and the crumpled Kennedy brochure and the scuffed McCarthy press release united together at last in the dust and hot dog wrappers.

It's a little sad and very lonely, right at the very end.

IN THE GALLERY, off the floor, where the kids were sitting, there were Kennedy and McCarthy posters. Hand lettered, looking kind of ragged, but there all the same.

The kids wanted in, but they weren't delegates. They carried signs, but they weren't in on the countless huddles that decide things when a convention is going on. They cheered when their candidate was mentioned, but they couldn't vote.

They stayed to the end, those kids.

They watched that awesome, fantastically convoluted and intensely human thing that is a political convention. They saw power being fought for and, bit by bit, transferred from one group to another. They saw men being drunk or silly, and they saw men fighting boldly and creatively for what they thought was right.

They saw politics in action. I hope they liked it.

This Is The Week That...

...By Don Hoenshell

They had to call the cops twice, and the elevators kept sticking between floors with VIPs, and the permanent chairman was shouting over a bad throat.

The Democrats were back in fine form, and it was a great state convention.

State Chairman Sander M. Levin, the voice of reason and the soul of decorum, was ecstatic.

"If we can just keep these high intensities in perspective, we'll come out a helluva lot better and much more united," he said.

"This is a convention where everybody's got a choice. There are some who want us to guarantee them they will win."

FIGHTING IS AS Democratic as apple pie. When Democrats start eating strawberries for breakfast and sitting by the pool, it's a Republican year.

For the past few years, Democrats have been fairly quiet, except for former State Chairman Zolton (Zorro) Perency and the new Michigan Conference of Concerned Democrats.

Now, they're out of their rocking chairs and battling again.

Police were called twice in Detroit, once for a pushing match in the 6th District and once for a corridor melee in the 14th.

During the main convention itself, Atty. Gen. Frank J. Kelley called a news conference two rooms away to describe his position on Kennedy's nomination (Let's watch the wind sock, generally).

The shouts from the convention floor interrupted him and a reporter asked him what he said.

"I'd like to know what's going on out there," said another reporter, bolting from the room to the scene.

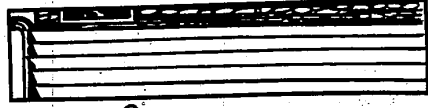
JUDGE T. JOHN LESINSKI, trapped between floors in an elevator with 19 other people, brought the Detroit fire department screaming up with a crowbar to open the doors.

State Sen. Coleman Young was the permanent chairman and used his training in union halls as a lifesaver. The technique is to shout out the maneuverers. It was a convention afflicted with decibels.

In the hotel, there were Kennedy girls and Humphrey girls and McCarthy girls in uniform, singing, imposing buttons and brochures on everyone in sight.

The Democrats are shouting and fighting again and all's well with that party.

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