

editorial opinion

School committee would help

The Farmington school board decided not to form a residents' committee to offer suggestions on issues, but perhaps the board should reconsider in light of its current problems.

The issue of a standing residents' committee, agreed, is not a simple question. It would have been easy for the board merely to have said, "This is something the district needs to help us pass a millage."

School board members argued that residents' committees tend to flounder unless given specific instructions. Such residents' committees previously formed in Farmington have come to the board and asked to be dissolved after a task was completed, school officials say.

OTHER COMMUNITIES have standing groups designed to make it easier for residents to tell the board their feelings on issues or problems. In those communities the standing committees have periods when a "hot" issue makes them very active and other periods when there is no particular issue to attract their interest.

However, the Farmington school district has enough problems that help is needed from all areas, especially from the kind of resident who can be expected

to join a standing committee of the kind being considered. The problems faced by the district—an increased financial squeeze, decreased enrollment, and others—will not go away overnight.

A standing committee, therefore, should have several years' work ahead of it concerning current issues alone. In the future, there may be other issues which will arise requiring a residents' committee's help.

If no issues face the district which can hold such a committee's attention, so much the better. It can be dissolved.

The questions involving a residents' committee concern its use as a political tool, either by generally pro-school or generally anti-school groups. If the committee represents the broad community rather than pressure groups, it cannot be manipulated.

The Farmington school district seems to be suffering from a lack of direction—even those groups which generally support local schools and back new programs appear to be undecided as to what the district should be doing. A residents' committee could help clarify the direction in which the district should be headed.

Juvenile law revision

The state legislature will soon consider revisions in the state juvenile code. Rep. H. Lynn Jondahl, D-East Lansing, is the prime backer of the new code.

One phase of Jondahl's proposal which has stirred serious questioning among the state's judiciary would totally eliminate so-called status offenders (runaways and incorrigibles) from juvenile court jurisdiction.

ALTHOUGH JUVENILE court judges generally recognize a difference between "family" type offenses and adult crime, there is strong opposition to remove these entirely from the court's jurisdiction.

Judge Eugene Arthur Moore, Oakland County probate court and chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee to study juvenile code revision, believes all manner of voluntary community resources should be used first to solve a problem. However, should the voluntary community resources fail, the problem should be placed before the court.

Judge Moore, who is also chairman of the Juvenile Affairs Committee of Michigan Probate and Juvenile Court

Judges Association, believes that "family" type offenders should be separated from adult type offenders and should not be placed in secure detention such as a state training school, but the offender still should be under court jurisdiction.

"IT WOULD mean that the 10 or 12 or 14-year-old youngster who is unwilling to avail himself of voluntary community resources would just be allowed to run," says Judge Moore.

Even if the child were prepared to accept help from a community resource but the parents were not, under Jondahl's proposal the court could not enforce parental participation.

The probate and juvenile judges association have strongly opposed Jondahl's bill. In Oakland County we have a runaway shelter, 27 youth service bureaus, Common Ground, Family Services and other private agencies.

However, some children or parents will not accept this voluntary help. In this case, as a last resort, the court must be in a position to help.

The Observer & Eccentric

DIVISION OF SUBURBAN COMMUNICATIONS CORPORATION

HENRY M. HOGAN, JR., Co-Publisher
PHILIP H. POPE, Jr., Co-Publisher

R. T. THOMPSON, Executive Editor
MICHAEL R. MARCELLINO, Editor
Oakland County Newspapers
NICHOLAS SHARKEY, News Editor
WYLLIE GORDON, Acting Managing Editor
ARTHUR S. SHAFER, Marketing Director

Member of
MICHIGAN PRESS ASSOCIATION
SUBURBAN NEWSPAPERS OF AMERICA
NATIONAL NEWSPAPER ASSOCIATION

Eccentricities

by HANK HOGAN



The worm has turned

Speakers on college campuses have always been a ripe subject for discussion.

Back during the McCarthy era the world was shocked when some college administrators allowed alleged Communists to speak on campus, which would allow them to subvert the minds of the gullible young.

But the liberals won and those treacherous Communists did appear on campuses because there was a feeling that a true student should be exposed to all different points of view so that he could make up his mind as to what is right.

THE WORM HAS turned, and the fallout from the Watergate team now is scheduled to visit campuses to tell the real story behind corruption and the misuse of power.

In this case, the great liberals are saying that these people should not appear on campus because they are convicted criminals and college students should be protected from the like.

The difference seems to be that in this day and age there is a concern on the part of some people that these people are being paid to appear on college campuses and therefore profit from their criminality.

There wasn't any concern when Alger Hiss,

also a convicted criminal, was paid for his round of lectures.

The picketing and conversation seem to miss the point—that every time a person is not permitted to speak a point of view is suppressed.

In America we pride ourselves on freedom of speech and the feeling that minority views have the right to be aired even if the majority doesn't particularly agree with them.

If the minority view is always suppressed, then new ideas could never be presented to the world. We all know that some very unpopular new ideas of past ages have become the majority view several years later.

If we follow the view that all reasonable views should be permitted a forum, then the price a speaker is paid is determined by the process of supply and demand.

If not enough people are willing to pay a price to listen to a man speak he is either going to have to accept a lower speaking fee or none at all if he wants the opportunity to speak to people.

Isn't it about time America becomes sophisticated enough that we are willing to let people speak, even if we don't agree with them so that when we, in turn, have something to say, we will also have the opportunity to say what is on our mind.

Observation Point

by PHILIP H. POWER



A hero's right to privacy

Sister Mary Calasanta's habit is a dark, soft brown, with a white cowl circling a motherly, lined face. But the eyes snap, and when she stands her feet are angled on the ground, one slightly ahead of the other, as though she is ready to spring to action at a moment's notice.

This direct and able Felecanian nun has been for more than 20 years the driving force behind St. Mary Hospital in Livonia, overseeing plans, ransacking construction, guiding growth of what has become one of the major medical centers in the suburbs.

Last Friday I had the honor to present her the "first citizen of Livonia" award, a recognition jointly sponsored by this newspaper and the Livonia Chamber of Commerce. The big room in Vladimir's was filled with her friends and admirers, and as she walked slowly down from the stage into the standing, applauding crowd, it was Sister Mary Calasanta the community hero.

DRIVING HOME, I got to musing about heroes, and why they are so few.

For at this strange and bitter juncture of our history, we certainly could do with a few heroes and heroines to inspire us, but we just as surely knock them apart immediately as they surface.

We are in a serious recession, and we look back, longingly at President Roosevelt telling us that we have nothing to fear but fear itself, yet we read the magazines discussing President Ford's reading habits and wonder cruelly whether he played too much football without a helmet.

Michigan and its automobile industry are flat on their backs and we recall the vigor and energy of Gov. Romney calling for citizen action; yet we read the daily newspapers and see suggestions of a conflict of interest on the part of Gov. Milliken's running mate, Jim Damman, of Troy, and we speculate about bad pre-convention staff work countenanced by Milliken.

Detroit is a city fighting for its life; yet we watch the TV stories of Mayor Young's occasional scheduling foul-ups and wonder if the mayor — perhaps the only man with the raw materials to save the city — is infected with inattention to duty.

HAVE WE as a people grown too suicidal as to seek instinctively to smash down those who rise with the ability and dedication to lead us?

I think not — at least not yet.

But I do know that today we learn about our leaders from news media coverage chronicling in exquisite detail the intimate, private, personal details of their lives and characters. And I do know that very, very few men or women of flesh and blood can withstand such ceaseless probing into

their private lives as the media now generate without losing, at least for some people, that sheen of admirable perfection that is one component of effective leadership.

We know all about Sen. Kennedy's wife and her psychiatric and drinking problems. We hear of Mayor Young's woman friends in the Detroit papers. We see in the national news magazines pictures of Congressman Wilbur Mills jumping on stage with Fanne Fox, the stripper. And we wonder, critically.

PART OF THE problem is that for some of us, people must be perfect (whatever that means) in their private lives in order to make it to heroism. I think this point of view is silly because it seeks to put real humans into a fantasy box; but that it exists is undeniable.

But another part of the problem is that the news media, particularly since the great triumph of investigative reporting on Watergate, have redoubled efforts to examine the personal lives of those who aspire to lead us and in so doing may have made it much more difficult for them to help us as leaders and heroes.

Certainly, the saga of Richard Nixon's flawed presidency lends force to the argument that it is right and fair for the public to learn something of the private life of our leaders in order to reach judgments about their character. But do we really need to know in detail every mental and physical defect of everyone even marginally connected with power? I think not.

AT THIS newspaper, we know that the wife of a certain city councilman is an alcoholic, but as long as her illness gives no sign of affecting his public performance we will not print the story. If this newspaper were to learn that the son of a local official were a homosexual, we would not print the story unless we found solid evidence that the official's duties were affected (say, by blackmail).

This is not to say that the news media should lay off our public officials. In fact, the public has in my view the right to know everything — everything — about the public's business. Period.

But the public does not have the right to know everything about the consequenceless gossip details of the personal and family life of public figures. They, too, need privacy, perhaps more than the rest of us.

And that's why when we learned that Sister Mary Calasanta was to be honored as the first citizen of Livonia we made no particular effort to probe into intimate details of her personality. She is a hero to her community because of what she has done for it. That, for any person who strives to help, is more often than not quite enough.

From our readers

Book sale success

Editor:

The Book Mart committee sends thanks for your coverage of our recent book sale. The news articles by Shelley Eichenhorn and pictures by Dick Kelley certainly contributed to our overall success.

PAT LUND
Rochester Junior Women's Club
Book Mart committee

Valley Woods praise

Editor:

Our children have been very lucky to attend Valley Woods and have gained experience in living with other unequaled in any other school in the Birmingham area. With a very sound educational background, three have advanced to junior and high school.

We attribute this to the team teaching concept with each one accelerated at their own pace. The fact that Valley Woods used this method was a factor in our home buying. We presently have three children at Valley Woods all enjoying their studies and after-school program.

As important to us as the academic achievement is the social exposure they are receiving on a normal day-to-day living basis. Our school is unique in its cross section of varied and national heritage.

As a Junior Scout Leader, our

Troop 343 was commended as one of the few troops with Caucasian of Italian, Irish, German and English backgrounds. Oriental, Near Eastern and Negro members. Truly a United Nations in action.

Protestants, Catholic and Jewish faiths are represented and our International Friendship Day has real meaning. Our school has achieved through a natural process of new homeowners what other schools would like to have.

Statistics show this multi-ethnic breakdown is unusual in any suburb. Many parents seek out the Valley Woods area because it is a mixed school and, with over 150 homesites available and other four bedroom homes on the market in the area, this trend will continue.

Already 15 new students have enrolled since the recent count. We hope the board will look closely at Valley Woods unique cultural heritage to be shared by all.

The Scouts have a saying, "We are a little United Nations...let us grow strong together."

MRS. JOHN H. FINLEY
Bloomfield Township

Drive was smooth

Editor:

Now that the 1974-75 Goodfellow year is over, the staff of the Farm-

ington Goodfellows would like to thank those people who donated their time and efforts to this year's program.

Whatever area they worked in—packing, delivery, collecting toys, dressing dolls—it could not have been done without them.

Many things were hard to get this year, which put an extra burden on those responsible. But the job got done, and this year it ran smoother than it has for many years.

Those who helped this year—we hope you'll be back next year. And we also want to extend an invitation to others, who as yet have not participated but would like to.

Those of us who have been around the program for a while know that one ingredient that must be present to make the organization in order to extend its help.

Our heartfelt thanks to all.

RICHARD L. TUPPER,
Vice Chairman
Farmington Goodfellows

Keep Adams open

Editor:

Please do not tear Adams down. We love our school. We want to keep Adams open, please. We do

not want to be bused. So please keep Adams open.

AMY TIKKANEN
Birmingham

Move administration

Editor:

Most members of the public school community are angered that more alternatives to closing "one or more elementary schools in the system" are not being seriously considered by the board. For instance, why shut down a vital link in a community already fragmented geographically, when the impersonal, heavily-mortgaged Administration Building sits on Merrill draining our school millage?

Why not cut administration staff, move into an already existing facility, perhaps a Junior High, where the loss to students and community would not be as emotional as on the elementary level? Surely this alternative would provide enough financial relief to insure that no elementary school would be forced to close within the immediate future.

SEARON B. SMYLES
Bloomfield Township

Worth 1,000 words

Editor:

Too often we're quick to criticize and to neglect compliments on good work.

I would like to congratulate you on your photographic staff. They, by far, take the best pictures in these parts. (I'm including the metropolitan Detroit papers.) Not only do they have a great sense of artistry but they also take excellent action and on the spot pictures.

The one in today's paper (Monday, Feb. 10) is beautiful. I just wish you had identified the street.

MRS. JEAN SPOELSTRA
Birmingham

What's profit?

Editor:

I am overwhelmingly distressed by your recent article in the Farmington Observer & Eccentric regarding the recycling of newspaper. You state that "...waste recycling for Farmington area groups is strictly a non-profit business." What is profit? Are you speaking of monetary profits or are you speaking of humanitarian profits?

If we're going to discuss economics I think that it is important to note that we are sitting in the middle of an economic time bomb. I am sure that you are aware of the high rate of unemployment in the state of Michigan. How profitable is it to pay \$88.00 per month in unemployment benefits? How profitable will it be when all the statistics for crime are recorded for 1977? How profitable will

it be when there are no trees left on this planet to produce the paper we are using? What will the price of recycled paper be then?

You may say that these questions are not economically related to the waste recycling program for the Farmington area. I can only assume that the \$507 additional cost for recycling, that you mentioned in your article, represents labor.

People employed do not draw unemployment compensation. People employed are not as likely to commit crimes. And people employed in an endeavor which is imperative to our own survival is most definitely economically profitable.

You paint a bleak picture, and your facts are distorted. You are not doing your job as a reporter when you present only one side of an argument.

DONALD A. LOOSLI
Farmington Hills

Better headline

Editor:

A more appropriate headline for your paper would be: School closing considered — 5 million dollar swimming pool being promoted in Birmingham.

TRESCOTT A. HENSHAW
Birmingham