

OBSERVATION POINT

Instant Empathy: Try Ready-To-Suffer Disasters

By Philip H. Power

Regular life really is pretty impersonal these days.

You go to the supermarket and wheel your cart around, with no one saying hello as you dodge through the crush at the check-out counter. People ride in an elevator and everyone in the car busily looks down at their toes. At the gas station, "Gimme three bucks of regular." Nothing else. But consider how it is during some unusual or grim event.

A bad snowstorm, and everyone is asking if they can help you out if you're in a ditch. A heavy summer shower, and everyone's talking to each other about how bad the flooding was in their sub. A bad fog, and people offer you a lift home if the buses are running late.

Remember the big electric power blackout on the east coast a couple of years ago? In New York City, hardly the most human place to live, people were out helping the cops direct traffic. Old ladies found people offering to help them up the darkened stairs. People said hello to the couple in the apartment next door for the first time in their life. Crime dropped sharply.

ALL THIS got me to thinking about that game, "In My Govern-

ment," played by that jovial columnist, "Mad" Alvin, who writes for the morning friendly paper.

Well, in MY government, we're going to do something about this problem of impersonal life.

We're going to have an entirely new cabinet-level department down in Washington. Maybe even at the state and local level.

It'll be called the Department of Harmless Natural Disasters. It will be staffed by a few people with plenty of smarts, a good sense of humor, and enormous authority.

It will be their responsibility to design and create harmless natural disasters which, during their short duration, will help people break out of the everyday impersonal monotony of life and be more friendly and helpful to everyone else.

It will be a requirement of this department that any natural disaster created will, indeed, be harmless, and that the disruptions to normal life won't be too serious — just enough to jog people a little bit.

LET ME GENERATE a few examples, for the benefit of those to be appointed to leadership positions in HND:

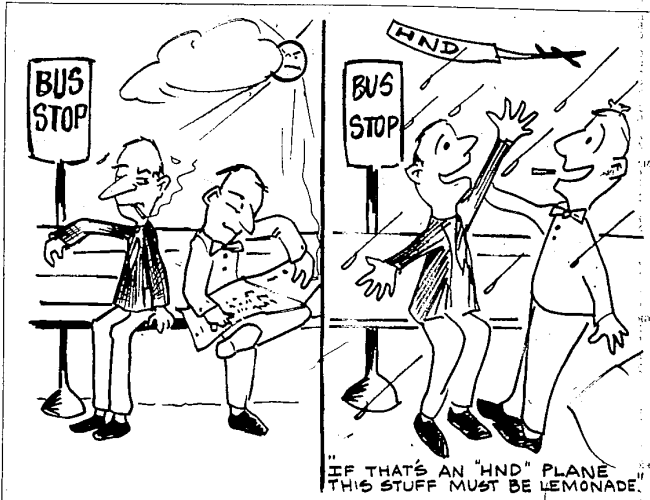
• Mysteriously cast a spell

over all school buses out here, so the kids won't have to go to school — but for one day and one day only. Mothers, who might be kind of lonely during the day, would have their kids at home. Fathers, returning from their office, would get an extra warm greeting from the wives, frantic after a day of kid-watching and eager for a chance to sit down.

• Drop 10 inches of snow over all of Observerland on August 3, just as the sun is coming up, giving people a chance to look in astonishment at the beauty of snow on the grass and trees. Then have the snow evaporate before it hurts any of the flowers, but leaving the entire area air conditioned for three days.

• Arrange for the sun to stop shining for two days in the middle of the day and then shine brightly for two hours the following midnight. In addition to generating lots of conversation, this would give people a chance to take a healthy moon nap and then a nice midnight walk.

• The possibilities of heavy snow, rain, fog, sleet, hail, electric power and/or gas failure are obvious. I wonder if Mr. Nixon's interested.



This Is The Week That ...

Tim Richard writes

Say It Ain't So; Please, Sir...

By Don Hoenshell

OK, Dear Mr. Kennedy and Dear Mr. Gross National Product, the women are marching and your days are numbered. It's all right, kid, around with us wage slaves but it's all over now.

For years the legend — Oh, sir, wish is were a legend — has been that women control 83 per cent of the national wealth.

Now they are angry. That word was going to be "mad" but there was too many women on the premises. Here's the why:

Grocery prices have skyrocketed — up 46 points on the Bureau of Statistics index in recent years. Beef prices have soared 28 cents a pound, to \$1.63 for porterhouse steak. The ladies are boycotting.

THE GRAPE boycott is child's play when you get women involved. They move mountains, and men. After all, they have the clout with the grocery dollar. You can beat a man to a pulp with dollars.

So the advice here is to form a blue ribbon commission of women to determine policy for the big grocery chains, and for independence, too, for that matter. Husbands have caved in to this sort of thing for generations and it's time the big grocery men did.

There is a national move afoot to boycott beef. It is a message that comes home to every dining table. For some reason logical only in the feminine mystique, the guy who sits at the head of the table is the target.

"Do you know, dear heart, that sirloin has gone from \$1.24 to \$1.39 in the last six months? That, dear heart and man of my dreams, is why you're having a dandelion salad tonight. It's good for you, youghage."

"OK, Sweetie, let us dine on some of those delicious things your wizardry concocts from the lowly hamburger," you say, grandly.

"At 70 cents a pound, you're out of your head."

"Then, how about a chuck roast with the carrots and the other stuff," you say. "Nourishing and, with your touch, it's fit for a king, namely me."

"Well, Your Highness, that lowly chuck roast is now 72 cents a pound on a national average and your friendly local grocer, needing a new station wagon, has priced it up to 83 cents a pound."

"AS A MATTER OF FACT, I'm scheduled for the afternoon shift on the picket line tomorrow so you'll have to get dinner for yourself and the kids. But, no meat, understand?"

A card-carrying Republican is hard put. He can't blame it on the Nixon administration and he

faces a boycott of another kind if he buys a bag of peaches or apples or even peanut butter and jelly. Things like this tend to break down his leadership in the family.

There is little solace in history. Women imposed national prohibition in the time men were overseas fighting World War I and it took the returns until 1933 to get back legal booze. They (women) had a good decade. It was about this time they got the right to vote.

Now they are responsible for the most part in getting the 1963 constitution for Michigan. They are prominent in the grape boycott.

It sold well, being neither good literature nor good pornography. The hard cover version set a record for first-week sales, the movies are bidding astronomical sums and the paper backs are ready to roll.

ASIDE FROM the Holy Bible, the book says more about us than any other ever written.

—Don Hoenshell

THE PLOT was simple. A radio personality living in the suburbs found that her husband had been dallying and set out to avenge her psyche by seducing every male in the neighborhood.

Michigan law permits a parent to take his child out of sex education classes if he wishes. This should be sufficient for the opponents to sex education who gathered recently at Lansing to badger the Legislature and the State Board of Education.

Their efforts are not really bent toward protecting their own children against imagined horrors, however, but to impose their own stern moralities on others, a pastime which has been a favorite of the hard-nosed for a number of thousand years.

Stepping in as a modern Cotton Mather, we have Sen. Robert Huber, fresh from trying to burn Oakland University Chancellor Durward Varner at the stake, and the education board has its own Torquemada in James O'Neil, treasurer of that group.

BOTH OF THEM, and their friends, are posing as protectors

Sex education was not an activity that the teachers were dying

to take on. They had sufficient problems with other aspects of teaching.

But they assumed it at the urging of public health authorities and parents themselves, concerned about the rise of illegitimacy and venereal disease during the early '60s.

IT WAS OBVIOUS then that children were not getting sex education at home and that the gutter was a poor teacher.

A large number of children have now been through sex education classes. They are quite calm about it. It came at them like the new math, which caused considerably more of a stir among their parents than among them.

After observing some of the dark hints about sex coming from their elders at Lansing the kids must be wondering what they missed.

Reprinted from Detroit Free Press

Bond Issue Fiasco Haunts Housing

A proposed state bond issue for housing is already in trouble, more than a year before it is scheduled to go on the ballot.

Gov. Milliken, liberal Democrats in the Legislature who sponsored it, and the non-partisan establishment concerned with resurrecting Detroit have no one to blame but themselves.

The Legislature has voted to submit the low-income housing bond issue to the voters in 1970. Ironically, the amount of the proposal is \$100 million — the same amount as the recreation bond issue which voters approved in 1968 and which caused so much political trouble in Lansing in 1969.

WHEN THE RECREATION bond issue was proposed, there were crystal-clear statements — morally but not legally binding — that the money would be spent on certain projects under state control. Goaded by the Cavanaugh and the Reuthers, who had opposed the bond issue in the first place, the governor proposed diverting more of the funds to cities.

In an era when many preach not just dissent but absolute distrust of government, this was an extraordinarily bad move. Hate conservationists predicted at the time that voters would never approve another state bond issue.

Some are now at work to make sure their prediction comes true. Take, for example, the editorial in the current issue of Michigan Out-of-Doors, published by the

Michigan United Conservation Clubs:

"The new bond plan, designed to produce low-income housing, follows in the often muddy tracks of two other bonding proposals approved by voters last November . . . (which) immediately came in for 'pork barrel' treatment on both sides of the Legislature . . ."

"Terms of the new \$100 million low-cost housing bond proposal have already been subjected to jockeying tactics in the House of Representatives . . . Outstate House members declared that 'human misery knows no geographical bounds' and succeeded in riding the bill of language

Sense And Nonsense

Seven-year-old tossed a penny in the Wishing Well at the Thunderbird Inn and made a wish: "I wish I had all those coins in the fountain."

TWA (Trans World Airlines) have been ruled down because of their prematurity.

On July 24, the day the Apollo 11 astronauts returned to earth from the moon, the company put in a request for a route to the moon which was promptly rebuffed by the Civil Aeronautics Board.

The board said it was their policy not to accept applications for routes where service might be considered premature.

which aimed the funds at cities only.

"There are growing indications that a significant number of voters suffered a complete loss of faith in their Lansing lawmakers during the bitter struggle over the recreation bond funds. Many have declared they will never support another bonding proposition of any kind, regardless of its merit."

THE MUCC INSISTS that the implementing legislation for the recreation bond issue failed to follow the 1968 campaign promises.

This observer must disagree. The legislators finally wrote what, in my opinion, was a good compromise: 30 per cent of the funds will go to cities, as promised, with 45 per cent going to state projects and the remaining 25 per cent allocated regionally and spent by the state.

The compromise follows the basic promise of a 70-30 state-local breakdown, with a well-conceived rider that the state must spend at least some of its money close to the places where lots of people live.

While the conservationists' criticism may be technically unjustified, however, there's no denying that their faith in state lawmakers and Detroit politicians has been seriously shaken. As a result, the 1970 low-cost housing bond issue proposal is already in trouble with the voters.

And the governor, the liberals who sponsored it and the establishment concerned with resurrecting Detroit have no one to blame but themselves.

Editorial & Opinion

OBSERVER NEWSPAPERS, INC.

Philip H. Power, Publisher

The Livonia Observer • The Redford Observer • The Westland Observer
The Garden City Observer • The Plymouth Mail & Observer
The Farmington Enterprise & Observer



Published by Observer Newspapers, Inc.
271 S. Main Street, P.O. Box 200, Plymouth, Mich. 48170

Serving the communities of:
Livonia, Plymouth, Farmington, Westland, Canton Township, Farmington Township, Redford Township, Garden City, Westland.

Don Hoenshell, Editor