



By PHILIP H. POWER
Publisher

OBSERVATION POINT

Why Do Folks Shun Drug Abuse Talks?

"Youngsters are selling heroin in this community in quantities that would shock you," Dr. Ralph Rabinovich, director of Hawthorn Center, speaking to a seminar on drug abuse for Livonia and Westland citizens.

"In July I went on a bummer, I got so high I was scared and asked for a downer. I really went into the bummer when I went home and was all alone. On the way I ran over a paper bag and I thought I heard a bloody scream. At home I laid down and smelled smoke, or thought I did. I lay there and could feel my flesh burning." Lynn, a 19-year-old former drug user now undergoing rehabilitation, speaking to a session on drugs arranged by the Farmington Area Jaycee Auxiliary and Farmington junior high schools.

"You should have the kind of relationship with your children in which, if they need help, they'll come to you. I think that at some point all kids using drugs are on the fence. In that instance, hopefully, one of the people they'll check with is you." Ronald Cowan, consultant in vocational rehabilitation for Oakland County schools, at the Farmington drug meeting.

IF THERE'S ONE problem which disturbs people -- parents in particular -- more than drugs, I don't know what it is.

For a long time, we all read about how those people (read Negroes) down in the center city (read slums) were getting hopped up on heroin and other drugs. We read of the human misery they caused, and sometimes about the addicts' habit.

Then, suddenly, we realized that drugs were not a problem confined to the center city. We began to find kids in the suburbs -- in our own suburbs -- smoking pot and experimenting with speed.

Teachers in our high schools remarked on the pot smoking going on even in the schools, and we noticed a new life style being practiced by the young -- a style which stressed, among other things, a new and positive attitude toward drug use.

And perhaps some suburban parents suddenly discovered that their own child was a drug user.

BUT WHILE ALL this was going on, public discussions of drugs and their abuse had much the same kind of quality that talk about venereal disease had 20 years ago: Everybody knew about it, but nobody was willing to discuss it in public.

Fortunately, this uneasy attitude is changing rapidly, thanks to a lot of sensible and dedicated people who realize that the drug problem isn't going to go away if we only bury our heads in the sand.

A series of sessions on drugs has been going on in Farmington, sponsored by the Jaycee Auxiliary and the junior high schools. School officials in Livonia and Westland recently concluded another such public meeting, and Redford Township officials have had a number of successful education programs.

Even the service clubs have opened their meetings to the subject. For example, last week the Livonia Rotary Club invited in Michigan's former governor and founder of NARCO, perhaps the most promising citizen-involvement organization now dealing with the drug problem. Swainson laid it on the line in his usual direct style, and the Rotarians liked it.

ALL THIS ACTIVITY is critically useful.

Why do people take drugs? Why do some kids start with pot and then become addicted to the hard stuff, while some kids do not? What can be done to rehabilitate drug users? What should parents do about the problem?

The answers to these questions are not easy; some of them are not now known.

But they will be known much

faster if free and full public discussion of the problem takes place -- and if people attach the importance to such discussion that it deserves.

That's why it was troubling to read Livonia Observer Editor Dan Gilmartin's account

of the Livonia-Westland day-long meeting. Some 300 people showed up at the start of the session, Gilmartin reported, but around 100 had left by the 10:30 a.m. coffee break. By the end of the day, Gilmartin estimated that only 75 remained.

Of course, it was a rainy Saturday and the golf courses were wet, which meant that there was nothing else much to do.

Nothing including, evidently, staying at a carefully prepared meeting dealing with one of the biggest problems of our time.

R.T. Thompson writes

Pitfalls In Off-Track Betting

Although those who would have you believe they are in the know in Lansing freely predict that Gov. William Milliken will veto the off-track betting proposal if it is approved by the Senate, there is more than a bit of speculation that Rep. George Montgomery is past the halfway mark in his drive to get the controversial bill passed and make it effective in Michigan.

The New York State Legislature passed a similar bill earlier in the year and it is in effect. But whether it is measuring up to expectations as a boost to the state treasury is still a question.

The answer probably won't be available until the end of the year. Then and only then will New York know whether legalizing off-track betting had the desired effect of pouring money into the state coffers and eliminating illegal handbooks.

REP. MONTGOMERY claims his bill will raise as many as \$42 million in a single year with portions of the tax going to the state, to cities which legalize off-track betting and to the tracks operating in Michigan.

Just where he gets the background to support such figures is another story. One can come up with any figures and make them sound feasible when presenting a bill of this type, but that doesn't necessarily make them true.

And that appears to be the case in this instance.

The Montgomery bill would open the door for off-track betting establishments in any city that doesn't vote against it, on the basis of one license for each 50,000 persons.

This makes the act sound lucrative for all. Montgomery and his group have broken down the "take" so that each community issuing a license would share in the proceeds along with the state and the Michigan tracks.

THAT ALL SOUNDS fine up to this point, but the big question is: Where will the licenses get the money to pay off those making wagers? Will they be allowed to operate on credit as so many of the "bookies" do today? Or will the one making the wager have to visit the establishment in person, make the wager and then come back to collect?

We can see the start of many betting spots such as those that

existed years ago when illegal handbooks and "bootleg" joints were rather common in metropolitan Detroit.

In those days, the spots had direct lines to the tracks and received announced descriptions of the races as they were run. Oftentimes the announcer at a "bookie" joint was even better at calling a race than the voice at the tracks.

These places had lunch counters, results boards on the walls of the large rooms, tout sheets and everything that went with the operation of a gambling place. Generally there was a few poker games going, a few slot machines and other devices to get the customers busy during the intermission between races.

And the race calls were not limited to one track. The results poured in from practically every plant operating at that time in the Midwest and east.

Those were the colorful days, days when patrons were constantly on the lookout for the police raiders who just didn't ever materialize.

IS THAT WHAT Rep. Montgomery is suggesting for Michigan? Is that what he would use to raise additional funds for the state? We wonder how many communities will put up with such gambling places.

And at the same time, how soon will it be before the hue and cry is raised for the return of bingo? It wasn't so long ago that

bingo was a rather common thing at churches throughout the state.

The "bookies" are now accepting wagers on horses racing at most any major track in the United States. The Montgomery proposal limits off-track wagers to those tracks operating in Michigan only.

AND PERHAPS, Mr. Montgomery isn't aware of the fact that "bookies" have places where they can "layoff" big bets they feel they can't handle themselves. Will his proposed act give the "bookies" the right to call the track with the "layoff" money or does he propose that a licensee handle all bets himself?

Is he aware of the fact that known "bookies" sometimes are barred from tracks because the management doesn't care to accept "layoff" money?

These are just a few of the things that the Senate should consider before it takes a vote on the bill. True enough, it has passed the House, but the Senate must approve or the bill dies.

From our viewpoint, we feel that all facts should be considered before the Legislature permits gambling establishments in every part of the state.

Why wouldn't it be wise to watch the off track betting results in New York for another year and perhaps more before making a decision? It could be a bad one if handled in haste...that's what is happening right now.

Tim Richard writes

Time For An Evaluation

For decades, teachers have been used to seeking sympathy, professional status and professional pay, so any criticism of teachers' methods and goals is likely to bring a torrent of wrath on the head of the writer.

But if one can survive the wrath of snowmobile dealers, he can survive anything, even the teachers' unions' wrath.

In a number of different ways, teachers' unions have amassed a great deal of power, and it's time for voters and the Legislature to take a serious look.

ITEM: The unions are en-

dorsing candidates. The Wayne Education Association tried to keep its endorsements secret and circulate the list privately, but an alert Observer editor ferreted out the list.

In Plymouth, it wasn't the entire PEA which made its endorsements but a "screening committee." The committee was careful not to label them endorsements, instead giving "superior," "well-qualified," "qualified" and "not rated" designations, but we all know what they mean.

School elections typically draw only 10-12% of the registered voters. If the teachers and other school employees vote as a bloc, they could become the most powerful single factor in a school district. The rest of us will have to be careful.

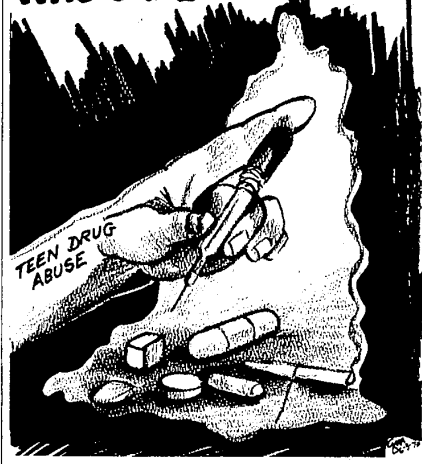
ITEM: If the auto workers strike, they lose their paychecks. They get strike benefits, but they themselves have paid into that fund.

When teachers strike, however, they lose nothing, because state law says the schools must operate 180 days a year, and teachers are in effect guaranteed no ultimate loss of pay for striking. That's patently unfair. It calls for some sort of legislative action.

ITEM: Teachers, like auto workers, can bargain over wages, which is fine. But teachers can also bargain over the number of jobs through their ability to bargain on class size.

Through their ability to bargain over both the quantity of labor and its price, they are bar-

WHO CARES?



Explains 'No' On Can Drive

By JOHN D. WILLIAMS
Regional PR Manager
Reynolds Metals Co.

Thank you for giving Reynolds Metals Company a chance to discuss its aluminum can reclamation program in view of misunderstandings or questions raised during the recent Earth Day activities.

We welcome the opportunity to reply to criticism in a letter to your newspaper by Mrs. Mary Ann Merline, a devoted teacher at Dickinson Junior High, Livonia.

Most of the misunderstanding originated with an article which appeared in a weekly student magazine, "Scholastic Scope" which mentioned that Reynolds Aluminum is paying \$200 per ton for aluminum cans.

Unfortunately, the article did not mention that the Reynolds program is not yet nationwide that it is only now expanding into 19 states. It did not mention where can reclamation centers are available to students and to the public.

As a consequence of this article, we answered hundreds of telephone calls and letters explaining that the article was true as far as it went. Reynolds is paying one-half cent a can, 10 cents a pound, \$200 per ton for aluminum (only aluminum) cans, but only in areas where the program is functioning.

REYNOLDS HAS established, or is in the process of organizing can recovery

DISSENT

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centers as follows: Miami, Florida (since Jan. 1967); Los Angeles, Calif. (since March, 1968); Houston, Metropolitan New York City, Pacific Northwest, San Francisco, and in cooperation with Adolph Coors Company to collect aluminum cans in Colorado, Arizona, Idaho, Kansas, Nevada, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Utah, and Wyoming.

In a telephone conversation we explained to Mrs. Merline that Reynolds does not yet have aluminum can reclamation centers in Michigan. We further explained the reasons. Of the total volume of all kinds of cans in this area, aluminum cans constitute less than 5%.

Reynolds does not want to start an aluminum can reclamation program that cannot be sustained in constant flow of aluminum cans for a long period of time. We certainly do not want to disappoint thousands of people with a short-term program that destroys incentive by having them seek through a few hundred "tin" cans to find a relatively few aluminum cans.

In time, we do hope to establish aluminum can collection centers in Michigan, but we expect any such program to be long-lasting and worthwhile. Further, Reynolds would publicly advertise the opening of such centers, and invite widespread cooperation, as it has done successfully in Miami and Los Angeles.

In Los Angeles, we are now averaging between one and one-third and one and one-half million aluminum cans per month turned in for cash. This is equivalent of 65,000 to 75,000 pounds of metal per month.

WE REGRET the disappointment of Mrs. Merline and her Dickinson Junior High students. Enthusiasm and concern for our environment and the beautification of our surroundings is shared by many. The distinctive difference is that they are eager and willing to do something about it.

Before writing this letter of explanation, we called Mrs. Merline to additionally clarify the Reynolds position, and the misunderstanding created by the "Scope" article with its partial facts about our aluminum can reclamation program.

Although Mrs. Merline made previous arrangements to dispose of the Dickinson can collection she has accepted our offer to transport the 30 or 40 bags of largely valueless "tin" cans to the disposal source.

We find Mrs. Merline to be conscientious and reasonable. She took us to task by suggesting that we only "pretend" to be concerned with litter and the waste of natural resources.

We believe the Reynolds record speaks for itself.

Our aluminum can reclamation program has been in progress for three years. It has been expanded, and will be expanded in the future. We make no pretense that the efforts of one company will solve the problems of scrap recovery, litter, or waste disposal. But, it is a good beginning, and it was begun without coercion, and before the public spotlight was trained on our many national environmental problems.

TO IMPLEMENT its anti-pollution policy, Reynolds has an Environmental Planning Committee with Dr. Robert F. Testin as director.

We hope that Mrs. Merline, her Dickinson Junior High students and your newspaper readers will understand that Reynolds does not need to capitalize on an environmental problem to gain recognition. We believe we have been trying to find some solutions, and demonstrating leadership in the process.

Since the future success of the Reynolds Aluminum Can Reclamation program depends on enthusiastic and concerned people such as Mrs. Merline, her students, your readers, and thousands of others, we cannot accept any suggestion that Reynolds is deliberately misleading in public statements about this program.

Editorial & Opinion

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