

Broomfields will leave legacy behind

WHEN THE LONGEST-serving Republican in Congress and his wife someday leave Washington, they'll have to move out of his choice office with its exquisite view of the Capitol and probably away from their colorful home in a nearby Maryland suburb.

But Bill and Jane Broomfield will leave something permanent behind, something that most people in the Oakland County suburbs — which he has represented for nearly 34 years — know nothing about.

When Republicans in Washington congregate for business or pleasure, it's often at the Capitol Hill Club, a five-story, white painted brick, fed-

eral-style building located just a short walk from the Capitol and from the buildings where our legislators have their offices.

During an interview earlier this month with Jane Broomfield, she told me: "Bill was instrumental in building it. When he did the building, he asked me to do the interior."

Coincidentally, the Broomfields took me to the Capitol Hill Club for lunch, so I was able to see it for myself.

THE CLUB was buzzing, although Congress was on Spring Break. During a brief tour, Broomfield,



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vice chairman of the powerful House Foreign Relations Committee, pointed out the various reception areas, meeting rooms and restaurants. Meanwhile, his wife checked out the condition of upholstery, explaining that a piece of furniture had been moved — perhaps for a special

event — or that some were missing. She made a mental note to track them down.

The club is both elegant and practical. Republicans who belong may use it for a quick meal in the grill to a major meeting in one of its many banquet rooms or to take a visiting journalist to lunch in its main dining room.

It can be taken over on weekends for parties and events. Both of the Broomfields' married daughters held their wedding receptions there.

Before moving to this permanent site, the club had apparently outgrown rented space in a Washington hotel. In the early '70s, when Gerald Ford was Speaker of the House, he asked Bill Broomfield to take charge

of raising the money and finding a site on which to build.

FUND-RAISING is never easy, but the building also lies within the Capitol's historic district. Anyone living in one of our communities with historic districts, such as Birmingham, Farmington, Troy or Rochester Hills, knows what difficulties that poses. It had to pass analysis by both the House and Senate building committees as well as the Capitol Historic Commission.

The Democrats have their own club, the National Democratic Club about three blocks away, but no one stands at the Capitol Hill Club door asking to see a GOP membership card, and many members of "the other party" reportedly come as

guests. "I understand there are lobbyists that belong to both of them," Jane Broomfield quipped.

Anyway, I found it interesting that though we track our congressmen's votes, look to them for passes to Washington sights and write them when we have a particular problem or issue, not many of us would know of this kind of involvement.

"It's probably the most important thing I've done for the party," Bill Broomfield said. What a very nice legacy for this long-time Oakland County congressman, and his wife, to leave behind.

Judith Doner Berne is assistant managing editor for the Oakland County editions of the Observer & Eccentric.

Clerical duties rule

Q: With all we have heard lately about students and drugs and now student suicide, I wonder what our counselors are doing? Do our school counseling programs perform the services intended and are they structured properly? Are our students receiving sufficient individual and group counseling in our schools?

A: No students are not receiving sufficient individual and group counseling in most school settings. However, let's not point our finger at the typical school counselor until we consider what counseling was supposed to be and what it is.

I am familiar with the courses required for a counseling degree. These courses are appropriate for training future counselors. Most future counselors when they entered the profession pictured themselves spending most of their time in the direct counseling of students. This is not what happens in the real world.

Let's break down a typical high school counselor's school year. In the fall counselors are required to make many class schedule changes. Schedule which counselors developed with the students and their parents during the previous spring. Course changes in September include overloaded classes, dissatisfaction of certain classes or teachers by students or parents.

Once the schedule changes are over, the task of filling out college applications for seniors begins.

No sooner do the college applications pile up on counselors' desk than the Michigan Education Assessment Test (MEAP) rolls around. This state mandated test is usually accompanied by the local school district's own adopted standardized test, such as the Metropolitan Achievement



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Test of the California Achievement Test. All this testing activity takes considerable time from the individual counseling many students need.

But it doesn't let up. Next are college entrance tests, the SAT and the ACT to organize and administer. And if a district has its own Criteria Reference Test Program (homemade test that measure achievement in each subject taught) both classroom teacher and counseling time is required.

Then at the end of each marking period, those students having difficulties (grade-wise) are called in for counseling. In the spring, counselors are often sent to the middle or junior high school to develop class schedules for eighth grade students and their parents in preparation for entering the high school setting. A great program but time consuming.

Furthermore some counselors are given the responsibility for senior activities, graduation exercise, career counseling and liaison with academic department heads.

In May and June, counselors have to identify those senior students who may not graduate, counsel them, plead with the students to get their act together, plead with the parents to help and hope teachers will grant the student a last opportunity to do the necessary work to graduate.

In some school systems, such as Detroit, counselors also are responsible for student discipline which is

really a direct conflict with the counseling process.

Don't get me wrong. All these tasks and responsibilities are essential in running an effective high school program. But too many of the services are clerical in nature.

You ask if counseling programs are properly structured. I don't believe so.

What I envision would be a counseling program is one that begins in elementary school. A program built on preventive intervention, a program that addresses the children's problems before they become major issues be they drugs/alcohol, divorce, physical/sexual abuse or suicidal tendencies.

I envision a secondary program where para-professionals handle most of the clerical work, the testing program and college applications (proof read by the counselor).

I envision a program where counselors are more available for individual and group counseling, for time to present seminars on suicide prevention, for training teachers etc. The real world says this probably won't happen because it would take lots of money.

Yes, counselors perform the services intended under our present structure. Unfortunately, too many of these services are clerical. Free from these clerical tasks, counselor would then have more time to perform the services you believe should be delivered in the school setting.

Dr. James Doyle is a former assistant superintendent in the Troy School District. Questions for this column should be sent to Doc Doyle, c/o Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150.

Holidays: 'I'm confused'

HERE I GO again. Getting all confused.

In Rochester, which seems to have been getting too much attention in the news for the last few months, another peculiar situation has developed.

It was in that northern suburb, you may remember, that tempers flared not so long ago over a controversial "holiday policy" that served to restrict the celebration of Christmas in the schools.

The policy, in effect, outlawed the "celebration" of the holiday in the classrooms, limiting the observance of the annual rite to activities that had educational value. The policy is a bit more complicated than that, but that's the essence of it.

I'm not sure that I totally agree with the restrictions, but the underlying purpose of them seems noble enough.

As I understand it, the purpose of the policy was to keep the "majority" (read that Christians) from imposing their views and beliefs on the "minorities" (anybody other than Christians).

That interpretation may be somewhat simplistic, but it gets to the heart of the matter.

The flap that ensued was so intense that the schools decided to appoint a "task force" to study the policy. And when the members of the task force got together, they decided



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on what seemed like a logical approach at the time — survey the parents who have children attending schools in the district and see what they think.

So the surveys went out — 10,000 of them. And now the returns are in — more than 2,400. That represents almost a 25 percent response rate, and that's quite good for any kind of mail survey.

THE RESULTS — well, they're still subject to interpretation it, but according to published reports, 52.2 percent of these responding indicated that they were generally satisfied with the policy.

Of the others, 41.6 percent expressed dissatisfaction and 6.2 percent had no response.

Now the numbers are close. You could report that "more than half of the respondents were satisfied with the policy," or you could say that "almost half of the respondents were dissatisfied with it."

The interpretation depends on whether you view your glass as half

full or half empty. But, whatever the interpretation, none of it seems to make much sense.

If the point of the policy is to keep the majority of the students/parents from imposing their views on the minority, then why bother to take a survey to see what the majority views are?

Isn't that a contradictory concept? If most of the respondents had said "We hate the policy and we want to keep Christmas celebrations in the schools" wouldn't that simply have added to the problem that the policy was designed to address?

But now, since a majority of the respondents (albeit a very small majority) have indicated that they do not want to impose their views on minorities, does that make the policy OK?

Is it all right to de-emphasize majority views if a majority of people say it's all right? Put another way, is it all right to protect the rights of minorities as long as a majority of the people approve?

Isn't something skewed about this whole thought process?

I'm so confused. But then, I never did understand surveys.

Jack Gladden is a copy editor at the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers. He lives in Canton Township.

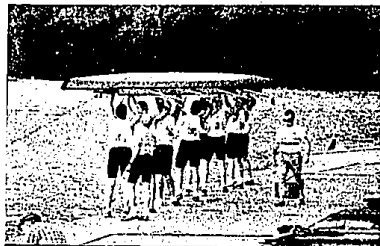
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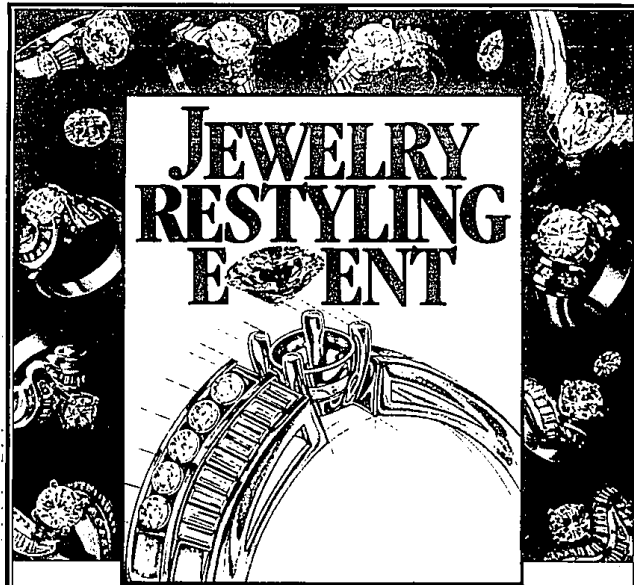
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