

Lone Reporter Hears C'ville Candidates

By LYNNE JARVIS
Suppose they held a candidate forum and nobody came... Six candidates eyeing two seats on the Clarenceville school board did the obvious Friday night when nobody showed up at Clarenceville High to hear them speak—they simply went home.

With disappointment and a few signs of relief, excuses from "the weather's too hot" to "Friday is a bad night for a meeting" were offered to explain what looked like total voter disinterest. A representative of the League of Women Voters of Livonia, whose group sponsored the ill-fated forum, said the whole thing was a "shame."

CANDIDATES WERE supposed to present their views in education and how to implement them. Each would have had five minutes for presentation prior to a question and answer period. The six who showed up, along with a half-dozen personal friends, were: incumbents Thomas C. Wilson, 65, a 14-year school board veteran and its current president; Dr. Samuel Prisk, 49, a board trustee for the past 12 years; and four challengers, Winfred M. Kirschke, of Livonia; William C. Van Dike, of Farmington; Mrs. Marilyn B. Rowens, of Livonia; and Mrs. Gertrude Walsh, also of Livonia.

Lack of attendance by voters didn't stop each candidate from spending some time with this reporter, however, revealing some interesting sidelights of their backgrounds, goals and future plans.

The two female candidates, Mrs. Rowens and Mrs. Walsh, both voiced the need for a woman and a "woman's point of view" on the board. She advocates the development of foreign languages in elementary grades and updating physics, chemistry, math and biology courses at the high school level. She also would ask for the closing of Westbrook Elementary School, if elected, on the basis that the school houses only 126 students and operates with nine empty classrooms.

They and all the candidates called for a greater emphasis on vocational training for students who do not go on to higher education. They further agreed that more study should go into planning a destination for \$1 million that remains from a \$1.5 million bond issue passed in 1965.

MRS. WALSH, known throughout the school district as an outspoken critic of a now defunct redistricting proposal, complained that the community had "lost touch" with the present school board.

"For years only professional and businessmen have governed the board. I say let me and people like me help from our own level."

But despite that \$1 million, Wilson, board president, said Clarenceville schools are facing the same financial crisis confronting most other school systems across the state. "If cuts have to be made, we'd have to do the best we can for the largest number of students. We could enlarge classes and reduce teachers, but if at all possible we would not go on half-day sessions," he said.

Wilson spoke of programs that have been "enlarged and enriched" during the past four years so that now Clarenceville schools "take a back seat to nobody." He said the elementary program is one of the finest programs around and pointed specifically to the reading program. "The basic thing we have to do is broaden the skills of elementary school students—once we teach them to read and comprehend, they can learn anything."

KIRSCHKE AGREED that each child must be provided with "basic communication skills" so that he will be able to "read at an acceptable level, write, and as I see it, speak." He called for a wider variety of subjects within the academic program in Clarenceville schools.

Dr. Prisk said the major goal of education is "the child's maximum personal growth." To insure this, he advocated constant evaluation and curriculum changes, if necessary. He said the board had invited the North Central Association to help evaluate present standards, adding he's "satisfied with what we're trying to do in the way of updating curriculum to be relevant to today's and tomorrow's needs."

Prisk said recent state guidelines, especially one that

ordered schools to furnish all school supplies to students, look an "unexpected \$50,000" from school finances.

boys who are or soon will be enrolled in Clarenceville schools, admitted he'd "be new" at the job of being a board member.

"I'd like to have some representation of our area" (near Westbrook school), he said. He rebutted Mrs. Walsh's proposal for closing

Westbrook saying, "If Gert thinks it should be closed, why did they enlarge it last year? The school has the acreage, space, classrooms and dedication of the people around it."



THOMAS C. WILSON
Board President



DR. SAMUEL PRISK
Incumbent



MARILYN ROWENS
'I Have Time...'



GERTRUDE WALSH
'Lost Touch'



WILLIAM VAN DIKE
'Trim All Areas'



W.M. KIRSCHKE
'Write...Speak'



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