

Readers' Forum...

'Shared Learning' Plan Stirs Pro, Con Letters

EDITOR'S NOTE: The Observer has been deluged with letters pro and con on the "Shared Learning" proposal that was recently considered by the Livonia Board of Education. The Board defeated the proposal in a 4-3 vote.

Basically, the idea was to have interracial, inter-cultural and inter-ethnic educational experiences between elementary pupils of Livonia and those of the same grade from the inner-city of Detroit. These experiences would have consisted primarily of correspondence, two field trips a year such as to the zoo, a Christmas party and a summer picnic together. The proposals included the proviso that parents would decide whether their children would participate in "Shared Learning" experiences.

Perhaps, significantly, the majority of letter writers -- both pro and con -- asked to have their names withheld.

the eighth grade. Many of my friends disagreed on the outcome of the vote, also.

Most of the kids in our school have never even talked to a colored child so how can they know what colored people are like? At least give them a chance to find out that Negroes are human, too.

My father is on the Board of Education and he supported the Shared Learning program. The other day he received an interesting phone call. He wasn't home so I asked if I could take a message. "Yes," answered the man, "I want to sell my house and I want to know if he knows any nigger who wants to buy it." I hung up.

I absolutely refuse to talk to such an ignorant person. We have to stop people like this; we have to do it now.

I hope more people agree with me, maybe it will change by the time I'm an adult.

AUDREY CRAFT
Livonia

Why Not Start At The Beginning?

EDITOR:

I would like to commend the Livonia Board of Education on its program to improve the teaching of human relations by means of improved curriculum content and the joining of the "Shared Learning Experiences Program."

Recently a person suggested by letter in the "Readers Forum" that we stick to Americanism first. If we teach that Crispus Attucks, a Negro, was first of five persons killed in the Boston Massacre, March 5, 1770 and is generally regarded as the first martyr of the American Revolution . . . that's Americanism.

If we teach about the many slave rebellions, of thousands of free Negroes in the North who took part in the abolitionist movement, or of the 200,000 Negro soldiers who fought in the Civil War . . . that's Americanism.

If we teach that at the ending of World War I, Negroes had furnished about 370,000 soldiers and 1,400 were commissioned officers . . . that's Americanism.

Today we adults who find we were not taught the truth should try to educate ourselves on Negro history. I would recommend "Before the Mayflower," a History of the Negro in America 1619-1964 by LeRone Bennett, Jr.

I agree, let's teach (the truth about) Americanism.

MRS. ELIZABETH M. HULL
Livonia

He's Against Shared Learning

EDITOR:

I am against the Shared Learning proposal.

D.H. GRIMSBY
Livonia

Go And Live In Inner City

EDITOR:

People like Dr. Heusser, Katz, Murch, Bill Canfield, Kay Swanson, Edna Mann, along with all the others, who think they are being denied the Shared Learning program:

Don't complain, do it the proper way.

There are plenty of homes in the inner city whatever size and price. The taxes are a lot less than in Livonia. Give up your jobs and become teachers so you can really share and help. Live with and socialize, not just for an hour or so once a month. (I know none of you are teachers.) Do it for a year at least or two. Not from your comfortable homes in the suburb where you can escape to when the going gets rough and you get tired of it.

You all are a bunch of hypocrites; you want to start something but you will be the first one to leave.

If you are sincere, move to the inner city and prove yourselves.

LIVONIA TAXPAYER

An Ignorant Phone Call

EDITOR:

I'm very disappointed in how the Livonia School Board voted on the Shared Learning program. In my opinion, it was an excellent idea. I'm 13 and in

Board Meeting Better Than TV

EDITOR:

Those who stayed home Monday, Oct. 25 to watch Rowan and Martin missed the real "laugh in." The program was actually held in beautiful downtown Livonia at Bentley High School, and the theme was, "Is a Shared Learning Program really necessary?" Many regular features of the Laugh-in format were retained. For example, throughout the evening there was "Soe it to 'em time."

To the glie of many present, the teacher who spoke in favor of the Shared Learning Program often had it "socked to 'em." When I spoke, I was booed, told to sit down and interrupted by cat calls. Another teacher was told "Thanks teach, the board will give you an 'A' for that!" by a gentleman sitting behind me. Generally, the teachers were lumped together and labeled "do-gooders." (They're supposed to do evil?)

Another feature of the program was "pokerri." An endless procession of demonstrators, protesters and just plain Americans came forth to give emotional and irrelevant diatribes (look that up in Webster's Funk and Wagnall's) which had little to do with the purpose of the meeting. There were lectures on the poverty programs, crime in the streets, gangs, not fired in 1952, and federal encroachment--it was truly potpourri.

One wise and distinguished gentleman offered his sympathy to my daughters because I want them to be open-minded, informed and understanding. Another interesting young man (no children) attacked my statement that the board and the educators should shape the destiny of a community.

It seemed as though the teachers appear to be sinister plied pipers leading the children of Livonia into the mountain of evil and hate. Appropriate to Halloween week, there were other witches, goblins and things that go "bump bump" in the night--most brought a message of fear and hate.

The best part of the show came last--"The Fickle Finger Award." It went to the four board members who opposed the program. Mr. Brown was the recipient--no comment. Mr. Tadonito had unanswered questions in his mind, but still voted no. Mrs. Joiner took a similar stand after she too had voted no. Neither attempted to get answers to their questions although the planners of the program were present and could have supplied answers.

Mr. Brashear is most deserving of the award because he admitted he lacked knowledge enough to cast an informed vote. Did he move to table the issue? No! He voted against. If Mr. Brashear is going to serve the community, he should prepare himself to cast informed votes or resign from the board.

It was a real fun evening and the lasting impression was brought into focus by the man who said, "Dr. Katz is making fools of us!" The truth is the speakers and the help they did give by themselves. "Very interesting--but stupid."

M. O'TOOLE
Parent
Taxpayer
American

EDITOR:

Many thanks for the public service you have performed by publishing the excellent Voters Supplements.

Thanks For Voters Guides

EDITOR:

It was gratifying to know that you really did give your instant approval and cooperation in printing a sample as requested.

I am quite convinced that you have given an important service to the community and that it will definitely, not only simplify the procedure but will reduce considerably the time spent in the booth by the voter. Thank you for your cooperation.

WILLIAM HENDERSON
Livonia

EDITOR:

LAURA DAWSON
15580 Gaylord,
Redford Township



Smoke Story Hurts Thurston

EDITOR:

We, two Thurston High School students, feel that your front page Redford story of the two boys who were caught smoking, in the Nov. 6 issue, was in very poor taste.

First of all, this article depicts Thurston. We have noticed how your sports articles praise the schools very highly, but when something bad comes up, do you have to put the school down?

Secondly, this matter should be a private affair between the two families and the school officials involved. It is not everyone's business to read of the trouble these two boys got into.

If this was one of your children and they got into trouble, would you want a story published across the front page of a suburban newspaper about them? I don't think you would.

Incidentally, one of the boys' names is Mike Newton, not Keith Newton. It seems that you small newspapers always get names wrong.

Well, I hope you will consider our letter and think more carefully about printing these private stories.

CINDY CHALMERS
Redford Township

Observer Praised For Aiding Voters

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Thanks For Voters Guides

EDITOR:

LAURA DAWSON
15580 Gaylord,
Redford Township

Obscenity Hit In Nankin Mills

EDITOR:

On Thursday, Oct. 31, my daughter, who attends Nankin Mills Junior High School, brought home a pamphlet from school that had several grossly obscene words on it.

This pamphlet was distributed by one or two hippie characters who spoke to the students at the school explaining the ideology of Black Power. There was a picture, the man's name and what he stood for, on this pamphlet along with the obscene words.

It is alleged these characters were brought into the school by one of the teachers, and in my opinion his activities and motives should be investigated. Obviously this is contributing to the delinquency of minors and I suspect the introduction to the usage of dope. Already the subject of dope is no stranger to the Nankin Mills School District.

A WESTLAND RESIDENT

Adults Fear 'Shared Learning'

EDITOR:

I suppose people have many reasons they oppose Shared Learning in Livonia. But basically, whether they admit it to themselves or their friends, they're afraid of what it might do to their children.

Goodness knows, children reject their parents' values enough as it is right now without putting them through a different kind of education than their parents had. But if a value is based on truth and not stereotypes or prejudice, then all the fires in hell cannot negate it.

Think about the boys going into service who disapprove of killing. They live with killing for a year or more, and do they come home killers or even more opposed to killing? By giving children the opportunity to know a whole group of kids of similar age, size and native intelligence, we let them decide if our values are based on truth.

Maybe they'll decide, as Mr. MacMain did, that they don't want to live near Northwestern. And they won't have to waste any of their life living there as Mr. MacMain did because they found out early enough in their life that they wouldn't like it.

But I think, as many people fear, the kids will decide to reject our values about race, and then all these children that we bred and raised to be peoples of us and make us happy and proud will be beyond us in their values concerning human worth and dignity.

My respect and admiration to Dr. Katz, Mr. Craft and Mr. Murch.

SUSAN THOMAS
Livonia

Against Raising Livonia Expenses

EDITOR:

I am writing this letter as a concerned citizen who fears our taxes are going up again and I can't afford that. How can our city officials talk about being short of money, in one breath, and then talk about building a new city hall, in the next breath? Where is the money coming from?

I say take first things first, there are so many more things in this city that need attention before our city needs a new city hall.

Our Senior Citizens should have adequate housing, but not that 350 square feet for \$19,000 per unit that our housing commission is talk about. I would think that the Housing Commission that Moeke appointed would have been able to come with something better than that after six years of messing around with it.

After all, you can buy a house for that money and the Senior Citizens are only getting a one room efficiency for that amount of money.

Our roads are in terrible condition, why not fix them up before we build a new city hall. Our Policemen and Firemen need more money and we particularly need more policemen for protection, so why not take care of that situation before we think about a new city hall.

Our schools asked for more millage and did not get it. I would rather see the taxpayers vote more millage for schools than for a new city hall.

Our councilmen should receive better salaries before we get a better city hall. The more money we can pay our councilmen and mayor, the better qual-

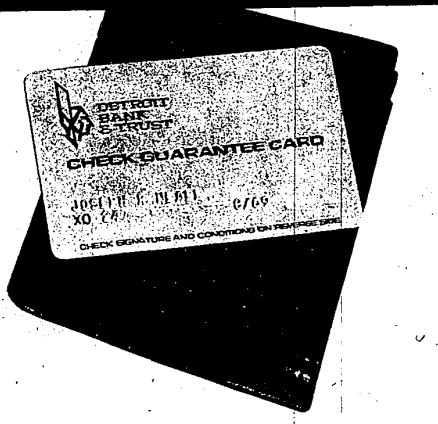
MRS. STEVE GISH
Livonia

ified men we will get to run for office. As long as we can only pay them a token salary, we can't expect to get top-notch men to run.

If we must have a bigger city hall, what is wrong with adding another floor to the already existing one. The more space we have, the more jobs the mayor will come up with fill the space with and the more money it will cost to run the city. I am for an asterly budget and I think it is about time we make do with what we have or find someone who can.

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