

The Method, Not The Name

Our critics will call it "sour grapes" and our friends will wish we had "let it lie," but The Observer would be less than frank if we did not express our deep disappointment over the naming of Livonia's third high school last Thursday.

Our hope, shared by many hundreds of petitioners, was that the school would honor Paul M. Chandler. Despite the fact that he was the publisher of our newspaper—our "chief" at The Observer—this hope was not based on any wish for commercial recognition or prestige. It was based on the fact that, as his employees and co-workers, knew—perhaps more closely than anyone else—Paul Chandler's deep personal commitment and dedication to developing a strong, educated community.

And it was his untiring efforts to use the press as a vehicle for continuing education and community debate that would have made the naming of a school for him especially meaningful. For Paul Chandler knew that education, if it had any relevance for the press, had to be rooted in a solid foundation. And his record in Livonia and in Lansing testified to his many endeavors on behalf of the public school system.

In any case, however, the school has a new name. The Board of Education has chosen to honor the late U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Adlai E. Stevenson. A philosopher in every sense of the word, a dedicated and articulate spokesman for the United States, Stevenson deserves our accolades. And, despite our disappointment recorded above, we believe the Board chose a name which Livonians will view with pride.

But—we cannot abide by the procrastination and the almost total inactivity used by the Board of Education to arrive at its choice. Surely, the fact that hundreds of citizens

petitioned otherwise, and that dozens of people took the time to offer a variety of names for consideration indicates that the naming of a school calls for public discussion and involvement. Yet, the Board—instead of dealing with this issue before an audience—had made its decision before coming to Thursday's meeting. And citizens who had requested prior notification from the Superintendent when the matter came up were not so notified.

The Board, realizing that this was an issue of some controversy, chose to hold its debate behind closed doors and then to don a cloak of unanimity in public session.

It is a sad commentary on the dynamism of democracy when Boards of Education so act. It was reflected a second time Thursday, when the Board voted "unanimously" to renew the contract of the school attorney. At least one Board member had promised to vote his convictions and cast a negative ballot. But he apparently was so intimidated by this same gesture of "unanimous front" that he took the easy way out and voted "yes."

Really, then, it was no surprise that a Board so dedicated to conformity would bypass the name of a man who saw and promoted the controversy as the healthiest ingredient of democracy and whose newspapers reflect this philosophy to the benefit of the community.

The Board's refusal to deliberate in public, its refusal to notify those in the community interested in this issue, and—in general—its lack of courage will hopefully change in the future. Even a glimmer of evidence that it understands the function of a public body in a democracy and realizes that it is a sign of strength, not weakness, to have debate and controversy, would be encouraging to the citizens of this community who look to educators for leadership.

DAVID ELSHIA

As a case in point of a group that is keeping the area up to date on developments, take the Westland Charter Commission, working toward an eventual incorporation of Nankin Township.

Decisions are publicized after each meeting, so that when township residents get around to voting on the charter, they should be familiar with many of the provisions and why they were included.

Many times, the issuance of a progress report seems unnecessary and tedious but if the project is big enough and affects many people, it pays off handsome dividends to everybody who has a peek through the krotchie in the fence.

I urge all civic organizations, engaged in important projects, not to hide their lights under a basket. Put the baby in a stroller and take him for a walk in the park where we can all get a good look at him.

BILL GAIL

And so, we citizens want to know about our babies.

How are the talks progressing on the extension of the water and sewer lines? Who is being considered for appointment as high mogul? When will construction start on the new 60-story building?

THE SIDE FOR KILLING 14-B

On this page, last week, my colleague Bill Gail made an eloquent defense of Section 14B, that part of the Fair-Hartley Law which permits citizens to enact right-to-work laws.

The position which he took was essentially that of the majority of Republicans, as reflected in their current defense of 14B against the efforts of Senator Johnson and the Democrats to repeal it.

In a strangely related event, a week earlier, the Farmington Township Board of Trustees held a public hearing on the same issue. The board, which is a relatively small, unorganized union of building inspectors in that community.

The reason it gave has at least surface validity: that if there was a union, it should represent all of the municipal employees in Farmington Township and not just one-seventh of them, as in the case of the building inspectors. "We say," wrote Township Attorney Joseph T. Brennan in his legal opinion, "if we are to have any union at all we should have one union to deal with, and not three or four in a relatively small community."

The Farmington Township administration, including its attorney, is to a man Republican. Though I have not polled its members, I am

sure that, to a man, they favor 14B and would fight its repeal.

They would fight its repeal, though they have a position completely contradictory with respect to their own building department.

On the one hand they say that to recognize the inspectors union would create a chaotic situation.

"Those familiar with newspapers and railroads," observed Township Trustee Earl Oppenheimer himself an attorney for the Grand Township, "know how vexatious it is to work with numerous small unions. You'd spend more time bargaining with unions than running the Township."

Clearly, here are revealed the real desires of the Farmington Township Board of Trustees. They do not want to have to deal with a number of little unions, which would be "vexatious" and "costly." They do they want to have to deal with a single, large union, which would have the strength to deal with them as equals.

ALLEN ROSENFELD

Naming The School

The naming of the new Section 9 High School has been an item of considerable interest to a great number of Livonia citizens. Petitions containing 450 signatures urging the adoption of the name were sent to the School Board several weeks ago. Letters from several citizens asking consideration for other names were also received by the Board.

As long ago as January, and as recently as the last School Board election, specific names were made by us to the office of Benton Yates, Superintendent of Schools, to be notified prior to placing this item on the School Board agenda. Despite these requests, despite the obvious public interest, the School Board failed to decide this issue at its regular meeting on August 19 without notification to any of the known interested citizens.

It was only by accident that we learned of this at 11 p.m. the previous evening.

Upon arriving at the meeting and requesting to be heard on behalf of Paul Chandler, Mrs. Strela Schreiber, President of the Board, asked us not to make any remarks prior to the vote as the names had already previously been decided and nothing we could say would affect the decision.

DR. JAMES R. WATT

THE RELOCATION OF

DR. JAMES R. WATT

CHIROPRACTIC PHYSICIAN

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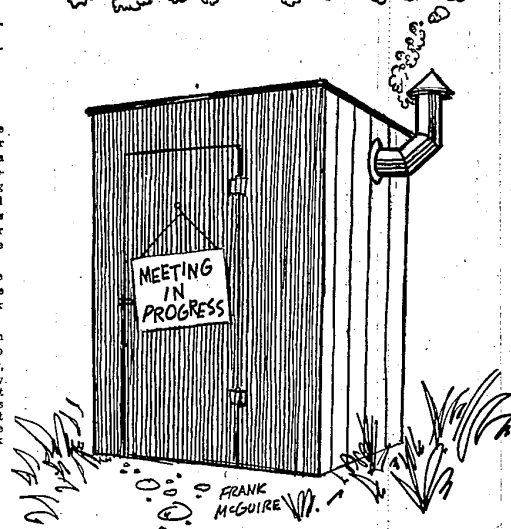
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DECISIONS



The Readers Speaks Up:

We Must Discipline Vandals

Editor:
Having experienced vandalism in our park across the street and in the premises of the church (broken lights, windows, stair railings, etc.) it would seem to me that we of Livonia need a new approach to discipline or perhaps a return to an older code.

The current attitude of letting the parents' insurance take care of damages isn't really doing much for the offenders or in fact for the whole community. A sense of community pride or responsibility will not return to anyone unless those guilty of destruction have to work to replace glass, play equipment, picnic tables, hand instruments, grass, trees, and all the rest.

Can we not therefore as parents, judges, City councilmen, Mayor and councilors agree that children, young people and adults who are not beyond working off their debts to society? Must we forever punish ourselves in our delusions that this should be as painless as possible?

No, I feel that the time has come (and I hope we are not too late) to elevate the worth of all work to the position it deserves in our heritage.

In no sense do I see the repairing or replacing of a city park picnic table or tester letter as degradation.

Rather I envisage such involvements in work as a prelude to civic pride and personal satisfaction. We do not have to parade up and down the streets through what have offended society by destroying public or private property, but we should insure ourselves against tomorrow by developing within our own youth a sense of responsibility.

Protection of our children and youth is one thing, coddling and babying kids is another. What I am proposing is a change in attitude which would permit us to deal honestly, forthrightly and creatively with those whose energies have been mischanneled.

May I trust that this proposal will receive favorable consideration?

ARTURO BUEMLER, Livonia

Speaking Up
The Observer welcomes contributions from readers to "The Reader Speaks Up" column, but requests that all letters be signed and limited to 250 words. We reserve the right to edit letters for length. Names will be withheld from publication upon request.

'Ambiguous Words'
Editor:
On behalf of the Federation of Livonia Civic Associations, I would like to correct and make a clarification regarding two erroneous and/or stated statements, via editorials, which appeared in the August 18 issue of the Livonia Observer.

First, let us take your words, "The Federation took a 'hands off' position on the proposed one-mile tax hike for police and fire salaries which will go on the Sept. 14 Livonia ballot."

I am sure you are aware that on August 4 our city council adopted resolution #768-65, providing for a general 4 percent increase in police and fire salaries.

The cooperation and unanimity of purpose in the Federation membership to the Federation of Livonia Civic Associations would be: (1) Each individual civic association has its autonomy maintained and jealously protected. (2) Each individual civic association has a voice and a vote through its elected delegate or alternate. (3) A delegate is entrusted to give an honest report, to his civic association, of the Federation meeting.

The invitation to attend Federation meetings is still open. Our Election Meeting will be held on September 20, 8 a.m. at the Livonia Police Station, Room B-3.

GEORGE KENDRED, President, Federation of Livonia Civic Associations

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Observing the Scene...

By MYRA CHANDLER

There is a term that is heard frequently in political circles known as "conflict of interest." It is used more frequently during an election campaign.

When the Mayor of Livonia asked me to fill a vacancy on the Livonia Planning Commission this was my immediate reaction. "Oh, I couldn't. I would have a conflict of interest."

His reply was, "Who hasn't?"

Taking it home and musing over the subject I realized how true it is. No matter what we become involved in, there could easily be a conflict of interest with the work we do to earn our living. Scouting, PTA, church work or Red Cross—even a social or service club—if we are going to cheat, it is better that we not become involved in our community at all.

Either you apply principle and integrity in everything you do—and take your chances—your intentions will be recognized, or you come home from your work, pull down your shades and don't bother with the world. It isn't possible to become involved "just a little bit."

It's like getting a little bit wet, or a little bit drunk, or mad, or dishonest. Either you are all or you are not.

It is a show of faith in your community when you get involved. I have faith in Livonia and now I am about to prove it by giving of my time to do what I can to assist my community.

All these platitudes come without attending a meeting. Having sat on the other side of the railing on occasion when some particularly irate citizen yelled out, "Ya, are you takin' money under the table?" I'll probably be ready for bare pistols at dawn.

The Observer is also displaying a show of faith this week in Redford Township faith that citizens are interested in what a real community newspaper has to offer. The Observer, beginning this week, will be delivered into every home in Redford Township free of charge. This is a change of policy in Redford to match the blanket coverage The Observer gives Livonia, Plymouth, Farmington, Nankin and Garden City. It is not an experiment.

We believe it is our function to inform, entertain, reflect and lead the community toward the better things. We want the respect and love of the community—but if we have to make a choice it will be our aim to have the respect.

One Man's Public Philosophy
Editor:
This is just mental exercise, but according to the popular concepts of the day, it should never have been written. For some 25 years we have been leading to confine our communications to small talk. You may even have a widow tell you that her late departed had much trouble to learn the art of small talk. Now if talk is indulged in as food for the whole man, and who is there who would like to do the faculty of speech, then small talk can not be other than small food. Diets are sometimes embraced so we may be fit into something, perhaps a size 12 or back into the age of 12. At any rate if the diet is continued too long we may know a hearty meal for the mind.

Last weekend I admired a mammoth church building, which would still be a large building if it were only 25 percent of its present size. The building is beautiful, and has a tremendous message. Then the minister came to me, could the minister have a message as great as that of the building that housed it? Should his message lack the majesty and grandeur of the building, his would be small talk. But should he have called out nature's demands for the glory of God, would he have many listeners? Have we been vaccinated with small talk against a full life?

Do we as a people live in the eternal now, as we have been advised to do, or are we still travelling in a far off country? Ancient script tells of the glads and the feast when we return. War has no return.

Dedicated men fill the ranks of all governments, but we have usually withstood the test of any challenge.

All great men live in lives, and all great relationships are well nourished and have meaning and understanding. Not even a seed will germinate in a vacuum. Let us live to a great fullness, and if we cannot reach others, we will have taught ourselves.

When youth gathers the concept that if they are surrounded by a form of solemnity they have to move, they have to change their environment. They are likely to embrace chaos, because order has come out of chaos, they have polarity. Perhaps we should double our police force, because some need to be served. We should have rules that they may force others to live by. But let us look at our own natures and the great happiness that we have.

Rev. Eddy Defenders
Editor:
We have viewed with dismay the recent assault by citizens on Rev. Robert Eddy's freedom and integrity.

The health of our society demands the realistic confrontation of all social problems in an atmosphere of open inquiry and respectful listening. Unless there is the willingness to study and evaluate new ideas, the fear, social progress is not possible. If our old values are worth preserving, they will easily withstand the test of any challenge.

We know Rev. Eddy to be a man sincerely concerned with helping others and eminently qualified to be of service to the community. We know that he has not sought the present publicity but has become the victim of distortion and half-truth.

We do not endorse his solution to the problem of marriage in our society, but we applaud his willingness to deal with the serious dilemma with more than a perfunctory nod to "safe" answers.

We trust that the wise judgment of those who believe in truth above scandal will prevail, and that he will continue to serve his community with the distinction already shown.

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