

Observing the Scene...

By MYRA CHANDLER

Getting acquainted with strangers gives a person an opportunity to become reacquainted with himself and with what he or she believes. This is true for people in all professions—including journalism. Being a newcomer to a community gives a journalist an opportunity to re-evaluate what his paper stands for... and against.

To further explain: the publisher of "The Observer of Garden City" was called to discuss the apparent harassment of the Garden City School Board by our Editor in that city.

It was an amiable discussion. The Board members who were present proved that the school district is in capable—indeed above average—hands. They are conscientious, articulate and dedicated. What more can you ask of a public official?

The details aren't important. The results are. The aim of the school board of any community is to promote the best for the kids of the school district. An important factor is keeping the teachers of the district top grade, in the right atmosphere, and of good morals; also to communicate with the parents of the district so there is understanding, and thus support for important decisions involving policy and bond issues.

The Garden City School Board and The Observer agree on these points:

The role of the newspaper in a community is to be its conscience, to reflect the activity of the governmental bodies—and to keep the public informed. A community with confidence in its community newspaper knows it has elected honest officials—otherwise its newspaper would not let it know. Because a good newspaper digs out the facts. Its reporters dig out the facts because they ask questions—a good newspaper asks all kinds of questions and keeps informed.

A good newspaper rocks the boat.

The issue in Garden City was over the newspaper's right to know teachers' salaries and administrative salaries.

As far as this newspaper is concerned we think we and the public have a right to know this.

We do agree teachers' personnel files and students' files must be kept the concern of the individual and his superiors—we do agree to "executive sessions" where the press, the public, is excluded—when morals charges are involved—when teachers' files are being discussed relative to selecting a choice for advancement or for discussing purchase of land. We do, however, frown on "executive sessions" for general discussions, particularly of budget, change of policy, school programs or books.

The Garden City School Board agreed to give careful study to its policy and issue a statement. The matter of asking question of the interest that The Observer has displayed, just hadn't come up before.

Communications enter into the picture. Superintendent O'Leary has devoted all of his life to the Garden City School District. He has done a magnificent job that only a dedicated man can do. He has carried his schools through 25 years of building, growing and keeping pace with the students. He isn't apathetic either. No one denies the job he has done. He has been a fighting superintendent and has the reputation for getting the job done. Unfortunately he has short fuses and to disagree with him makes you wrong. His Board knows this—and so does Dr. O'Leary, really. With his record, when a newspaper is dedicated to keeping the public informed, it will only increase the fighting of the community, reduce his enemies, and gain even more support.

Enemies of education are enemies of this newspaper. A cloak of secrecy over school activities does not assuage enemies of a school system—it only encourages them and gives them an issue. Those who only want the right to know will in turn, support. We have seen it happen.

Yesterday's Headlines

25 YEARS AGO
The problem of tent dwellers in Livonia was the topic of a meeting called by the Livonia Township Hall by a group called the "Livonia Taxpayers Association" which described the area as "non-partisan" taxpayer in the township of the Caucasian race may be a member. Tent sites and camps had a "tremendous tendency to lower property values," the Association warned. Also on page one: "The Roadside PTA was preparing to observe national PTA week."

LIVONIAN, Sept. 25, 1940
South Redford parents who are demanding bus transportation "or else" remind me of children crying for their own food, and only then can we see the crisis take its place as one of the most severe blots in this city's history.

20 YEARS AGO
Livonians solved their garbage disposal problem in 1945 by opening a new dump. Location? At the west end of Greenland Ave. and "anything but permanent refuse" was accepted, the notice said. Meanwhile, diphtheria took the life of a seven-year-old boy and his parents were hospitalized with the same disease as fears of a local epidemic spread.

LIVONIAN, Oct. 8, 1945
10 YEARS AGO
The 1950s building boom was reported. Two big pictures on page one showed the city's new speed watch in operation. A device to check motorists, the mechanical watch trapped an average of 20 speeders a day, police reported.

LIVONIAN, Sept. 28, 1955
5 YEARS AGO
For Redford Township, Livonia, Plymouth and Garden City educators, this was the week that the first meeting of the county-wide study committee was scheduled. From the meeting was to eventually develop Schoolcraft College, Harold Fisher, chairman of the citizens' committee, opened the first meeting.

REDFORD OBSERVER, Sept. 28, 1960

LAURA CALLOW
GIVE-AWAY
The silence money boys may be golden, but sometimes it has the most telling effect.

Ed Note: As an M.A. on that subject she promises next time to consult with a Ph.D.

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THE READER SPEAKS UP:

'Fair Play' for S.R. Schools

Editor: I'm wondering after reading the front page article in this week's Observer (about the bus situation in South Redford) just why Mr. Giordano is so incensed about lack of busses when his children attend a parochial school. Last year was the first year South Redford bussed the parochial school children. How did his children get to school before that? Did he pay for a parochial school bus? If so, why does he expect the School Board to bus his children free when there are not adequate funds. He says nothing about the fact that the foreign language, art, music, library, etc., have also been cut.

I would also like to know why he thinks so much money is being wasted when South Redford is one of the best school systems (which is shown by the excellent rating our children make in their achievement tests) and they still operate on a smaller budget than Redford Union, Livonia, Dearborn Heights and Farmington, just to name a few.

The School Board reviewed the situation before cutting any. I agree that it is better for a child to walk and get some exercise and build up a little immunity to the elements (I did, my parents did and we're still here) than to cut their scholastic standards by fewer teachers, or worse yet, poorer teachers and overcrowded classrooms.

It has been said time and again how much softer each generation is getting. President Kennedy said that a better physical education program to build up the children. Is this why we are going to drive them up a dead end of school bus? They can go inside and get some exercise! Or should we be willing to pay the few extra dollars a year in taxes not only to insure our children RIDING home on the bus but also carrying home some knowledge in their heads?

De want to send our children to school to learn something and progress or should we pay for busses instead of good teachers and send our children to school to have a baby sister?

No, I'm not a member of the Board of Education, nor am I on the School Board. I'm just an interested housewife and mother who took the time to check into these issues so I could give you a well-thought-out and I felt compelled to write in the interest of fair play.

INTERESTED CITIZEN
Anti-Redford GOP

Editor: Just recently we were able to read a copy of the Redford Township Water Department's annual audit report for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1965. We were amazed at the figures we thought the public would be interested in.

The Redford Township Water Department buys our water from the Water Department of the City of Detroit. There has been no increase in the price paid for water. The Redford Township Water Department paid only \$124,240 more for water in a year ending March 31, 1965, than in the previous year.

This \$124,240 worth of water was delivered into an increased cost to the water users in the Redford Township totaling \$162,401.62! This represents the increase in water rates, sewage disposal rates, increased penalties and increased interest received on this money! The statement of operating capital for the year ending March 31, 1965, showed a balance of \$1,159,371.87.

The Township Board has spent \$310,000 of Water Department funds to purchase the so-called Maxtrix Property and at the September 7, 1965 Township Board meeting, the Board's own Board Council stated that the Water Department still has a cash surplus of at least \$285,000.

This prompted the Supervisor to tell the Board, "We may want to see if we can cut water rates soon." This is the same man who said that this writer, who campaigned against him and advocated a water rate reduction were elected, the Water Department would go bankrupt.

We are not going to let the Republican members of the

Township Board forget the foul, vicious attack they and their Party conducted against us when we requested that the huge cash surplus existed in the Water Department.

We believe that the time has come in Redford Township when those in political life will have to be counted by the public statements. Such out and out lies and false accusations cannot be tolerated as being part of a political campaign.

[Since these people have lied or by their actions, conducted these lies for purely political reasons, it can only be assumed they will do anything to perpetuate their lies and it is left to conjecture to assume what else they might do to gain the same end.

NATE NAKES Redford Township

Anti-Mayor Moelke OPEN LETTER TO LIVONIA COUNCIL PRESIDENT:

[Due to the continued resignations of all Police Officers from our Police Department, and due to the complete inability of the Mayor and his Police Safety Director, to resolve the most serious problem, a Citizens Committee has been organized for the sole purpose of conducting a complete and accurate study to determine the real facts that are prompting these resignations.

Apparently the Mayor and his friends prefer to pay policies and offer excuses, rather than to accept their responsibility as such we will attempt, and will no longer sit idly by, and allow this deplorable condition to continue.

The crime and accident rates in Livonia are alarmingly on the increase, while the effectiveness of law and enforcement has decreased to the extent that a state of emergency exists. Every family and business in Livonia is affected, and it is felt that more than ample time has been allowed our city administrators to exercise their responsibilities, which they have repeatedly failed to do.

As you are aware, the number of resignations have reached 19. This means that Livonia is operating 19 men short of the required number to give minimum protection to this city. We have resigned to believe that these resignations will continue unless immediate interest is taken, and that the true facts are learned, stated and reported, so that proper action can follow.

We, as citizens, must accept this responsibility. This committee shall endeavor to compile all pertinent facts and information pertaining to this problem, and then to compile a report, to the Council hopefully within the next 30 days.

We respectfully request the assistance of the City Council. Through our mutual efforts, perhaps the solution will be found, and only then can we see the crisis take its place as one of the most severe blots in this city's history.

RAYMOND J. BARBER JOSEPH W. DROST Livonia

For Civic Associations Editor: I am certain that the minds of certain Redford Township residents at Town Hall, who have the mistaken impression that the Redford Township Council of Civic Associations as well as the civic associations should complete a prior schedule of services to be restored when, if, and as money is available. Ideally, it should be completed in a meeting of good judgment, giving greatest consideration to those things which will affect the greatest number of people in their quest for education.

After all, "education" is the business of the schools, not transportation, food services, etc.

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A Study In Contrasts

With plenty of noise, but far less reason, a group of vocal South Redford residents has descended on its Board of Education once again in recent weeks.

Its target, this time, is the Board's decision to cut school bus service to conform to state limitations of 1 1/4 miles.

Its leaders are, for the most part, citizens who have evidenced little prior interest in the public schools, and some of its followers include political groups anxious for a few votes.

It stands in sharp contrast to another group of parents who are also dissatisfied with School Board cuts, but who are involved in a constructive and creative activity to overcome their dissatisfaction. These are the parents, clustered around the Junior Athletic Association, who are collecting \$10,000 in donations to restore the school district's junior high and reserve athletic programs, cut when the School Board fired its 1965-66 budget.

Both groups are an outgrowth of last year's millage defeat in South Redford. Put them side by side, and you have a classic example of the opposite ways in which citizens can react to a crisis.

Because of the millage loss, the Board of Education found itself with \$181,000 less to spend this year than last. To balance the budget, the Board voted to provide bus transportation for students living 1 1/4 miles or more from school. This is the distance for which the state of Michigan will reimburse the school district, and it is the same distance standard in school districts throughout the state. The Board eliminated junior high and reserve sports, cut the teaching supplies budget in less than half, eliminated purchase of new library books, the health service and the elementary language program.

A Memory Of Judge Pheneby

The news of the death of Sylvester J. Pheneby, on Tuesday, Sept. 23, brought to mind a date earlier this year—March 24—when Judge Pheneby proved himself a considerable man under difficult conditions.

It was on that date that he heard the case of the state versus Russell Roberts, a resident of Farmington and a self-confessed Nazi—on charges of criminal mind.

Roberts had induced a young man to distribute leaflets violently attacking the Negro race.

The case had attracted considerable attention and representatives of the daily press and television were on hand, as well as a self-styled truth squad from American Nazi Headquarters in Arlington, Va.

It was a mixed-up morality play with attorneys from all angles—the American Civil Liberties Union trying to keep the Nazi out of jail.

They argued that the laws of libel were intended to protect entire races of whole groups of people, that to do so "will be a dangerous precedent against freedom" of expression.

The Judge showed no emotion during the trial. His comments were measured and legalistic.

When he reached his decision, which was "Not Guilty," it was obvious that he understood the implications and the importance of that decision.

If there were those in the court room who felt he had acted out of coldness or indifference for students his was dispelled immediately on the trial.

Roberts—displaying a very un-Nazi-like of enthusiasm for martyrdom—humbly thanked the Judge for sparing him from a jail sentence or fine.

It was then that the Judge lost his objectivity and detachment (for a Judge, that was the proper time).

He looked Roberts in the eye, and told him he detested everything he stood for; further, that it would have been a pleasure to have sent him to jail; but that he had no constitutional right to do so.

It is upon such acts of legal principle as Judge Pheneby displayed that law in Farmington that our freedom is based. Perhaps, a bit of good honest anger helps the cause. Judge Pheneby had that too.

ALAN ROSENFELD

2000 persons needed assistance. McDonald, in fact, quashed the committee's request for anti-poverty aid from Washington at the same time that local right-wingers protested the plan.

Again, in LIVONIA, the Board of Education, after having had two years to correct itself, continues to force teachers to join or the other teachers' organizations in order to be paid hospitalization insurance. If a teacher wants to be independent and unaffiliated, the Board won't pay him what it pays the teachers who belong to it, well, that's the cost of non-conformity today and there are a few teachers who are feeling the pinch.

And, back to REDFORD TOWNSHIP, where the Democratic Party (for those who claim to represent it) gets mighty undemocratic in its actions. It's here that 10 of 22 members of the Party's executive board sign a resolution condemning the "Inhumanities" Board of Education for limiting school bus service to the state regulated 1 1/4 miles for which the schools are paid. We don't recall the Democrats fighting this millage issue last spring which would have corrected the situation. That, of course, was unpopular with voters. And it's also here, that a party officer rises at a closed meeting, dramatically pulls out a ten-year-old document, and implies that one of his political opponents "took the Fifth." Remember a fellow named Joe McCarthy? "I have in my hands a list..."

As we said, we're glad these weeks come only once in a while.

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