

Observer-land

FEATURES

Wednesday, April 5, 1 (F-9B, GCW-7B) Page * 11A

Just Chattin'

Old Bugaboo Crops Up Again—What is Society?

By W. W. EDGAR

IT LONG has been the custom, in many circles, to rate a working newspaperman just a little above the average in intelligence, not so much because he knows all the answers, but because he knows where to get them.

Folks have a habit of looking at a member of the work-press with a certain degree of envy because of the many persons they know in high and low places—and always seem to have the contacts when a good story is in the making.

Well, a lot of this philosophy exploded one evening not too long ago when I had the pleasure of speaking before a group of young folks who were interested in journalism.

In extending the invitation the group informed me that they'd like to hear about such things as the "glamour of newspaper work," "the excitement of gathering news," the "thrill of attending outstanding events," and the fun of "meeting so many people."

It seemed like a big order, but it was simple after destroying the image of a working newspaperman as shown in the movies.

"SURE, newspaper work is exciting," I told them "because it is the writing of a daily history of the community."

I quickly informed them, too, that, contrary to what they may have seen in the movies, there is no chaos in a newspaper office when a big story is in the making.

"There is no time to get excited," I explained, "and each man must do his part—and do it on time."

All was going fine until I concluded and then asked "Are there any questions?"

There was silence for a moment, then a young girl, seated in the front row, spoke up.

"If newspaper men know the answers—or where to get them—you should be able to tell me."

I assured her I would be glad to try.

"Fine," she said, "can you tell me about the women's pages? What do they mean by society? Who selects the members of society and what are the qualifications?"

It was then that I learned all heroes have feet of clay.

"Young lady," I began, "I wish I could answer your questions. But I have worked on and around newspapers for some time and no one has yet been able to define 'society' for me."

For a time, in my younger days, I always measured society in terms of money. I was led to believe that "society" meant the rich in worldly goods. But, after a while I got to know quite a few folks with sizeable sums of money, who wouldn't be considered for society's blue book by any stretch of the imagination.

Then I attempted to employ another measuring stick. I thought for a time that "society" was that group of folks of high mentality.

Then, one day, I happened to have an opportunity to mingle with this "society" and found, to my utter amazement, that some of these folks were not too bright, either.

So, what is society?

I'd like to find out so I can answer this young lady.

Impressions . . . Shaughnessy

Last week's meeting of the Farmington Township Board was a refreshing change. It was refreshing in that a considerable amount of open and free discussion preceded a vote on a very hot political issue—pay raises for the full time Township officials.

Before going further we had better explain that we have absolutely no quarrel with the Township Board's action. We agree completely with the philosophy that in order to attract competent people to public office a just and decent wage must be paid.

For a Township the size of Farmington Township the proposal of \$15,000 salary for the Supervisor is not too high. In fact, this is closer to a just wage than the \$13,750 finally agreed upon by the Board.

The Township trustees should be commended for, at long last, having an open discussion about a serious issue. Too often the Board comes to the table with the matter having been settled and agreed upon behind closed doors.

This method simply gave impetus to the grumblings among the citizenry that the Township Hall was a "closed corporation." A good case in point is the Board's tight security restrictions on who was going to be appointed to fill a vacancy on the Board.

Here again we have no quarrel with the final decision, but we think that the public's interest would have been better served had the public been informed about who was being considered for the post.

This seeming fear to discuss anything controversial openly is not unique to the Farmington Township Board.

Unfortunately, it is a malady that seems to be common to local units of government. In fact, the smaller the municipality the more cautious the Board becomes.

An interesting point is that it is not unique simply to this area. A weekly newspaper published in Chicago's north suburbs carried an editorial not too long ago which stated in part:

"The closed meeting of the Wilmette Plan Commission graphically illustrates the need for a proposed amendment to the state's open meetings law."

"Since the meeting was called simply to discuss the proposed \$85,000 master plan for the village, the planners fulfilled the letter—though not the spirit—of the existing law, which merely requires that public bodies conduct 'official' deliberations and take final action at meetings that are open to the public."

"The key word is 'official' which can be defined to exclude almost any type of discussion."

"Public officials might argue that a public atmosphere often impedes free and open discussion. We can understand this, for human nature tends to inhibit men in public . . ."

"The plan commission is not the only public body that fulfills the letter of the law and no more. The park, school and village boards or their committees also have met privately to discuss matters other than personnel or land acquisition."

The only change that would have to be made to make

Please Detour

The Observer will pay \$5 for any picture taken by alert photographer Lin Lewis printed on the Feature page. The above of Livonia.

Professional Corner

Engineering

News—Views—Students Guidance by Daniel E. Warren, P.E.

A question frequently asked by students is "What does an Engineer do after graduation?" Rouge Valley (local chapter of M.S.P.E.) has discussed this many times with students. Almost invariably this leads to another question, "But what if he gets out of Engineering?" This is hard to answer, since an engineer seldom gets entirely out of engineering; his type of educational background is invaluable in many related fields of endeavor.

CONSIDER SALES ENGINEERING.

Sales Engineers are graduate engineers, usually with a degree compatible with the field they serve. Many Sales Engineers are registered professional engineers, although this is not normally a requisite for the job. A Sales Engineer may start immediately after graduation with the firm he serves, or he may work elsewhere in his field as a Design Engineer, a Service Engineer, a Field Engineer, etc.

Prior to actual assignment as a Sales Engineer he must go through a training program presented by his employer; this may be from a month to two years. He receives specialized training in the product or services his employer sells. He must know all the capabilities, uses, costs, etc., as well as any disadvantages of his product.

He becomes a consultant-in-fact to the engineers and buy-

ers whom he services. The work is interesting and varied. It entails meeting new people, visiting new places, and communicating his knowledge so it can be incorporated into the design of a product or project. A sale most often becomes involved in specifications of his product, engineering drawings, and particulars for installation or assembly. He may follow a project from its inception through design, construction, and finally to the finished product performing as it was originally designed to perform. Quoting: "Sales Engineering is a satisfying and vibrant field. New challenges are posed, adaptations of the basic product require the Sales Engineer to think, plan, and calculate. If you like to meet people, travel, can communicate intelligently, this is certainly a field to explore."

While not synonymous, management often is defined as supervision. "Middle Management" is the level of supervision one or more notches above the non-supervisory employee.

A good Engineer who also has the qualities of a good supervisor is highly desired. But as an Engineer goes up the ladder in supervision he deals more and more with management and less and less with the technical aspects of engineering. He is more concerned with the quantity and quality of output of his group, with personnel prob-

\$ Investing Inquiries \$

What Do the Dow-Jones Averages Mean?

The opinions are those of Laurence A. Wyson, a stockbroker for Paine, Webber, Jackson and Curtis, who is considered highly qualified in his field. Mr. Wyson welcomes any inquiries. Please send them to Investing Inquiries, Observer Newspapers, 33030 Five Mile Road, Livonia, Mich.

continue, although it is widely misinterpreted as a method of forecasting future action. Whatever the merits of the Theory, it is sometimes a strong factor in the market because many people believe in the Theory—or believe that a great many others do.

Airmen Start Training

Airman Terry R. Lytle, son of Mr. and Mrs. W. Ross Lytle of 16405 Riverside, Livonia, has been selected for technical training at Sheppard AFB, Tex. as a U.S. Air Force statistical data specialist. Airman Lytle, a 1966 graduate of Bentley High School, attended Schoolcraft Junior College.

Airman David E. Linderman, son of David E. Linderman of 8841 Seltzer, Livonia, has been selected for technical training at Sheppard AFB, Tex. as a U.S. Air Force medical service specialist. Linderman, a 1964 graduate of Franklin High School, attended Schoolcraft College.

Army Private William M. Cummings, 19, son of Mr. and Mrs. Edward M. Cummings, 32931 Southgate, Livonia, has completed eight weeks of advanced training as a combat engineer at Ft. Leonard Wood, Mo.

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OPEN EVENINGS UNTIL 9

by Sue Shaughnessy

the editorial from Illinois "local" is to change the name of the Board.

The Farmington Board of Education, the Livonia Board of Education, the Garden City Board of Education, the Livonia City Council and the Farmington City Council, upon occasion, have been guilty.

The Plymouth Township Board has also been known to do this. These are just a few of the local groups.

Maybe once the elected officials realize that the roof did not fall in on the members of the Farmington Township Board when they finally dared to have some honest discussion in public, they will take heart. Who knows, they might even summon their courage and do the same?

For the sake of the public we hope so.

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