

# Spotlight on Women

## LWV Speaks For Busing

By EMORY DANIELS

A group of women in Oberlin is spreading the message that integration is a pre-requisite for quality education and busing appears to be the only means to accomplish this goal.

This group is League of Women Voters members in Farmington, Livonia and Plymouth who have established a speakers bureau through the metropolitan committee, consisting of 17 Leagues in the greater Detroit area.

THE SPEAKERS are addressing civic groups throughout suburbia with the message that schools must be integrated and a warning for parents to prepare themselves emotionally to make cross-district busing believed inevitable by the League - as painless as possible.

Three women from the West Bloomfield-Farmington Area League appeared recently before the Rotary Club of Farmington to speak on the topic: "Integration: Possibilities and Problems." It was a balanced talk, presenting advantages and disadvantages of busing, and revealed the depth of research conducted by the metropolitan committee.

"Busing is not an educational system but a means of transportation," commented Mrs. Sue Russell, "and a technique to counter the effects of residential housing patterns which work against providing quality education for all children."

"A busing plan offers the best approach to provide quality education for all students," she continued, stressing that the league has not endorsed any particular plan but has become convinced through research that some type of busing is needed to integrate metropolitan schools.

The challenge facing all, she added, is how we can create multi-racial schools dedicated to quality education a reality.

MRS. DOROTHY HAASE explained the metro committee created four school integration study committees: a legal committee to study court precedents; a housing and zoning committee which mailed surveys to suburban

communities asking about zoning laws, building restrictions and availability of low-income housing; a transportation committee which surveyed suburban school districts on the number of buses they have, the minimum and maximum distances of students being bused and costs for busing.

The fourth committee, alternate plans, died quickly when it was discovered there were no acceptable alternatives. It was discovered, for instance, that providing new low-income housing in the suburbs would take quite a while and meet great resistance.

The Farmington League, while not endorsing busing per se, has taken a stand against any constitutional amendment banning busing. Mrs. Richard Gould, president, explains that "after careful study, we are convinced that busing plans offer the best - indeed, the only - opportunity for achieving integration and progress toward quality education for all students."

Mrs. Haase said the metro committee is currently compiling its research information and will release its report in booklet form soon in all Observer communities.

MRS. BILLIE HAWARD, who recently moved to Farmington from Kalamazoo which has implemented a two-way school busing plan, says riding a bus is a fact of life for 40 per cent of the total school population in the state.

Mrs. Howard presented the arguments of the spokesmen for and against busing and then summarized busing plans used in Boston; Hartford, Conn.; Washington, D.C.; Charlotte-Mecklenburg, N.C.; Rochester, N.Y.; Berkeley and Pasadena, Calif.

In Boston, she pointed out, suburbanites act as host families for inner-city children being bused to provide lunch in their homes or over-night housing in case icy weather prevents buses from moving. The black families in Boston proper also act as host families, and the hosts join occasionally for joint social activities.

"Project Concern" in Hartford resulted in only two to four black children per white suburban classroom with bus rides being 40 minutes at the maximum one-way.

The Washington voluntary busing was terminated at the start of 1971, she explained, because blacks objected that the busing was one-way and because the cost was high.

Blacks discovered that those children bused did achieve more, but the majority of inner city black children were left trapped in the black-only schools and were low achievers.

In Charlotte, where 60 per cent of the students are bused, problems have been encountered because the electorate has failed to insist that the school board con-

centrate on providing quality education rather than fighting busing, she adds.

DIFFICULTIES she listed in cross-district busing include racism among teachers, adaptation of curriculum, enrollment of students in private schools, financial problems, parental attitudes and changes in school board membership.

Positive aspects of cross-district busing that she cited include higher achievement for black students while middle-class white students continued to achieve at the same level, increased parental participation in the schools, expanded curriculum, innovative methods such as team teaching and loose groupings, improved school buildings and an increased awareness that education opportunities are unequal between schools.

Mrs. Russell argued against compensatory education plans by saying mere money and manpower additions are not enough. She mentioned property tax reform and integrated housing as alternatives but stressed that education will fall in a racially isolated framework.

"Tax reform is not the total answer," says Mrs. Russell, "because money cannot provide the stimulation and expectations for success which all children need."

She cited the Coleman Report, which stated that achievement scores improve in racially mixed classrooms and learning is hampered when blacks or low-income whites make up more than 60 per cent of the children in a classroom.

"It is not legally acceptable to simply provide more money for ghetto schools in lieu of integration," she stressed. "Integrated housing takes a total community effort but, instead, whites generally flee cities when blacks move in."

SHE ADVOCATED scattered, low-income throughout the suburbs and added that most suburbs have little or no subsidized, low-income housing.

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"HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU," the children of the Mayflower Townhouse of Plymouth sang to Mrs. Rachel Ritchie, who completed her first century last week. She's getting

acquainted with Stanley Simmons, at four months her youngest neighbor. (Observer photo by Bob Woodring)

### Nixon, Broomfield Help Too

## Kids Help Mark 100 Years

By MARGARET MILLER Women's Editor

All the kids in the Mayflower Townhouse in Plymouth turned out to wish Mrs. Rachel Ritchie a happy 100th birthday last week.

She also celebrated with U.S. Rep. William Broomfield, (R-Royal Oak), who turned 50 on the same day, April 28.

And had a personal letter from President and Mrs. Richard Nixon.

"IT WAS ALL pretty exciting and completely enjoyable for Mrs. Ritchie, who spent most of her life in the Sault Ste. Marie area and moved to Plymouth with her daughter, Mrs. Dora Busse, in 1967.

"I'd been wondering if I'd make it," she confided as the neighborhood children gathered for a day-before-youth-birthday party last Thursday.

On the big day, she was a special guest at Rep. Broomfield's 50th birthday brunch in Raleigh House, Southfield.

"We got up at 5:30 in the morning to get ready," Mrs. Busse said.

THE CONGRESSMAN brought Mrs. Ritchie a personal letter from President Nixon.

"We know this will be a day

filled with congratulations from your family and friends," the letter read, "and we want to add our warm wishes that peace, joy and contentment will always be yours."

Mrs. Ritchie was born in Sanilac County in 1872. Her husband, a dentist, died 40 years ago. They had two children, Mrs. Busse and a son who died in 1947.

Her daughter said Mrs. Ritchie still enjoys quite good health, gets around readily with the use of a cane and is "sharp as a tack."

THE TOWNHOUSE PARTY, arranged by Mrs. Marilyn Kramer, was complete with lots of balloon popping youngsters, a birthday cake donated by Sanders and best wishes from all the neighbors.

It was a complete surprise for the guest of honor.

"I've had so many surprises," she smiled. "It was upstairs fixing my nails and Dora told me I'd better put on a nice dress and some lipstick. And when I came down here there were all these people."

She enjoyed talking to the visitors and cutting her cake and especially watching the children. She had her first peak at four-month-old Stanley Simmons as his mother carried him over.

"I don't know very many of the children well," Mrs. Ritchie said. "But I will now, won't I?"

Ken Ives presented a paper flower that he and Tom Robinette, absent from the gathering because of a paper route, had made.

Ken also mentioned that he and Tom had a pretty sur-

prise for the next 100 years.

"We thought we should tell our teachers so the schools could make it a holiday," he explained.

MRS. KRAMER presented a card and several crisp bills from the neighbors that Mrs. Ritchie was to use to "buy something special."

A silver dollar fell out of the envelope, too. Mrs. Ritchie was delighted.

"I'll always keep it," she said. Maybe for the next 100 years.

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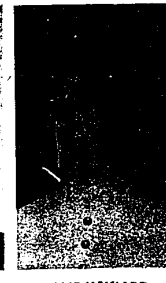
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BILLIE HAWARD

-Margaret Miller