

University To Combat Racism

On May 29, Chancellor Durward Varner announced a program was being set up at Oakland University to deal with the problems of racism in American society and the local area. Varner made the announcement in an interview with the Oakland Observer. He stated that the idea of developing some sort of mechanism or organ to "try to focus the energies of the university on this problem" had been approved by the Board of Trustees, along with \$50,000 with which to get the program started.

Said Varner in the interview, "Here is a priority problem. This university cannot stand by and not do all it can reasonably do to contribute to solving the problem in our community. We have taken an arbitrary figure of \$50,000--and I'm sure we could spend \$500,000 productively if we had it--to permit us to set up some kind of organized approach to harness the resources of the university community, students, faculty, and community leadership alike, to try to make a contribution to the solution of this problem of racism in our community".

The exact nature of the program has not yet been determined. A meeting is to be held within the next few weeks with people invited by the Chancellor to determine how the money will be utilized, and what kind of program will be carried out.

Apparently, the program will be along lines of the one being set up at Michigan State (reported in last week's Observer). That program was allocated \$10,000 by the Board of Trustees, and included work in the surrounding community as well as on campus. Similarly, Varner stressed some sort of involvement in the communities close by as necessary to an adequate program. An example of such involvement would be Continuing Education courses dealing with racism.

In assessing the university's role to solving the problems of racism, Varner stated: "There are many direct and overt things which have already been done and said. I think the payoff area is much more subtle than flamboyant public proclamations and noisy actions. There are some direct things which can and must be done." He saw the program being set up here as one such thing.



Chancellor Interviewed

The following Observer interview with Chancellor Durward Varner took place May 29.

Observer: "What was the response of the campus, as you saw it, to the assassination of Martin Luther King and what has been the general state of the campus since?"

Chancellor Varner: "Well, it came late in the year, and I think we may not have had an opportunity yet for the jelling of the effects of the assassination of Dr. King--the immediate reaction was a pretty traumatic one. I think the black students immediately coalesced on this issue. I sensed that some felt deeply about King; others did not really have any great affinity for him as such. But it provided a coalescing action, and it seems quite obvious to me that it brought about quite a solid front for the Negro student on campus. They became suddenly more galvanized as a black community than we have ever had on campus.

"It's hard to say what 3500 students thought or did, how they reacted. My sense was that for the white students, the attitude was almost one of bewilderment; something had happened miles away, a man did it, yet somehow I think all of the white community felt that a share of the blame had to be borne by everyone. I think the white students, at least the ones that I had any contact with, were immediately moved to try to do something to indicate their own remorse. Under these circumstances that wasn't very easy to do.

"As you know, a group arrived at my home and spent most of the night and the morning there, trying to decide what was appropriate. Out of all the talks some things did emerge; whether they were the

right thing, who knows. At least I felt it was a very genuine and wholesome effort to speak on the subject.

"I sense that following the assassination, the black student reaction has been somewhat tempered; the white student reaction continues to be one of not really knowing quite what to do.

WHITE RACISM AT OAKLAND?

"I am sure that in our white population there is an element of racism. It's regrettable. I suspect that in the black student community there is an element of racism. That is regrettable, also. It would be a great world if the racist elements could somehow be alleviated or corrected in both the white and the black groups. I suspect this an idle wish, though.

"I sense that the brisk, vigorous reaction of the black students following the death of Martin Luther King may be undergoing some re-evaluation with the realization that the university community is indeed deeply concerned; that insofar as the university community can officially deal with this subject it will not tolerate any racist activities, discriminatory activities...But you just cannot dictate what 4,000 people think, and that really is the heart of it. It isn't always what they do, it's what they think.

"I would hazard a guess, though, that 95% of the students have no self-identified racist characteristics; that they don't believe that they are racists. One of the tough problems we all face, however, is that it's extremely difficult for a white person to realize how the black person reacts to a white persons' action and reaction. Where my motivations may be pure and wholesome, what comes out of my (as a white person) motivations may not look this way to someone who approaches my action with a totally different set of eyes, a whole different set of experiences. So that when I say I believe that 95% of our white students have no deliberate attitudes which are racist, I realize they may manifest some racism that's totally unconscious, from their point of view--but that's totally offensive from the standpoint of black students."

INADVERTENCE and OVERSENSITIVITY

Observer: "One of the things some black students commented to me about after the assassination was that it showed, on Oakland's campus, how little the white students understand the black people. I also talked to some whites who showed strong signs of racism while at the same time coming up with what they felt were liberal solutions to the problem--not realizing that they don't even understand the problem yet. Is this the kind of unconsciousness on the part of the whites you see?"

Chancellor: "Um-hum. This is the real complication. I don't think the complication is students committing overt acts of discrimination or reflecting overtly the position of a bigot, but it's their inadvertence--where they want to do the right thing, they're trying to do the right thing, but because of the difficulty of the present situation and climate, they find doing the right thing very difficult.

"I wish--and I guess this is no less idle than the wish that we could eliminate all racism--I wish that the black students would also assume a share of responsibility. I've had a feeling that in some cases there is an oversensitivity, if this is possible. I say this with the realization that one can quickly say there is no such thing under the present circumstances. But it seems to me that black students and white students alike need somehow to come to grips with a very real problem which is part of our society, and try to do something--it doesn't do much just to keep flailing away at the "problem", identifying it over and over again.

"Someway we have to come to grips with this. This takes some flexibility everywhere."

Open Housing : A Grass Roots Effort in Pontiac

by Ruth Louise

On June 24, 1968, the registered voters of Pontiac will decide the fate of ordinance 1577. If the ordinance is passed, Pontiac will have its own Open Housing law. The possibility of such a law was presented by a group formed in April--the Friends of Fair Housing. The

group's chairman is Dr. William J. Donnelly.

In April the Friends of Fair Housing elected Dr. Donnelly and four co-chairmen. They also organized eight committees: religious, finance, civic, political speaker's bureau, research, public relations, and student. The objective was to reach all aspects of life in the community. Since that time they have organized voter registration drives in the community, largely through the efforts of Mr. James Davis and Mr. Ernest Ceay, who coordinated the drives. Between May first and May tenth their mobile units registered 1,507 people in the Pontiac area.

Why Open Housing?

Many citizens may question the necessity of such a law for Pontiac when national and state laws do exist to cover fair housing. The desirability of the law, according to Mr. Donnelly

and his group is that, if passed, it will go into effect immediately; whereas the national law does not go into effect until 1970, and the state's until 90 days after the legislature adjourns.

They also feel that the local law will be more effective and more just on the grass-roots level where citizens may have their cases reviewed by their peers.

Prospects for Passage

Dr. Donnelly feels his group has made real progress in that it has involved the average income white citizen--not the usual liberals. He feels confident that the bill will be passed. The very minimum his people are planning on is passage of the bill, but they will be disappointed if the vote is not more than two-to-one.

Thirty-two Oakland University students have participated in the voter registration drives thus far, but

more are definitely needed before the voting date. Students are needed to run surveys before June 24, and to help on the voting days with transportation, poll-watching, and other services.

If any students would like to volunteer for help, contact the Friends of Fair Housing at 3 1/2 South Saginaw, or call 338-4538.



THE OBSERVER

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Violence - The American Way



Two months after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, the Observer again finds itself with another public leader gunned down to comment upon. We refuse to prattle on about the "tragedy of this senseless act."

If the shooting of Robert Kennedy is a tragedy, it is only because he constitutes another individual victim of a nation of violence at work. If this individual act of hatred--in a country where racism runs rampant, a country whose leaders pin medals on professional killers -- if this act is tragic, then so is the general condition of our nation. For as in the killing of Dr. Martin Luther King, the shooting of Robert Kennedy only indicates the depths of the general sickness in this country.

Ours is a culture of violence, violence which confronts us every day. Toy soldiers, war profiteers, swaggering cops, and military recruiters are the bane of our day to day living. Police brutality, oppression of black America, and the war in Vietnam are the most visible symbols of the "American Way of Life as presently being lived."

It will serve no purpose for the people of this country to drone on about how senseless and irrational it is to have our public leaders daily threatened with personal extinction; it will serve no purpose for President Johnson to pray "that divisiveness and violence" be eradicated. For divisiveness and violence are a part of the very fabric of this nation at present: if the President wants to eradicate these characteristics of our national life, he would do well to look in his own backyard for those causes. If he and other public leaders wish to bring an end to violence, then they will have to stop perpetrating it themselves.

A few months ago, Bobby Hutton, a 17-year old member of the Black Panther Party in California, was murdered by Oakland police. There was no out-cry from the press; there was no reaction from the politicians. In Detroit a few weeks ago, the SNCC office was bombed; no reaction there. In Vietnam, the U.S. Air Force has announced it has plans to drop over 30 million gallons of chemical crop destroyants on South Vietnam in 1968. Our "defense" budget is over 80 billion dollars.

If the leaders of the country want violence to stop rebounding on them, they must take the responsibility to de-institutionalize the violence which is the essence of their own existence. As long as President Johnson spouts pious homilies while pinning medals on killers; as long as the congress issues standing ovations to the leading military men of the country; as long as children are starving in Mississippi and drowning in despair in Watts; as long as the strength of our economy is its defense spending and war corporations; then the "tragedies" of our nation will confront us with our own insanity.

What is going on in this country and what it is doing to other countries is indeed tragic: it is deplorable and senseless. It is ironic, however, that those most responsible for the tragedy are the ones who decry it the loudest. For though our situation is tragic, it is not inevitable. With a little less stupidity and facism in high places, it is just possible that the country could swerve from its present suicidal course.

That we are not, but in rare instances, swerving from that course seems to be the real "tragedy".

Mike Honey

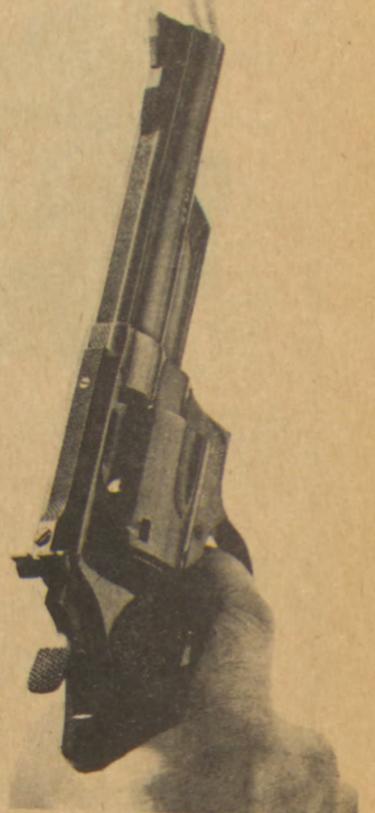
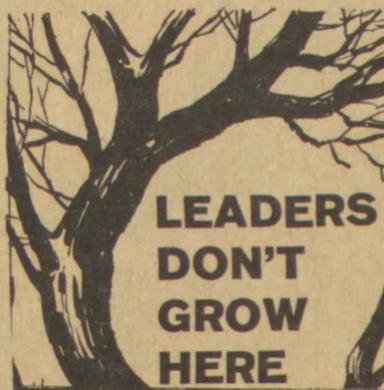
Again the citizens of this nation have been shocked into near hysteria by another assassination attempt on a major political figure. Again the sickness and violence that bubbles beneath the thin veneer of American society has erupted into a volley of gunfire. *One bullet in the shoulder, one bullet in the head.* The hope of literally millions of Americans has turned into nauseous despair. What is the future of a country that systematically assassinates its' great men? *One bullet in the shoulder, one bullet in the head.*

What hope can the people of this nation have if those seeking to move this country beyond the violence and hatred are slain? As Sartre once said, "We live in an age of assassins," and certainly the temper of this country is evil, evil exhibited by the hatred in a cop's eyes as he bludgeons students or

poor people to the ground, evil in the eyes of self-righteous congressmen ignorant of and undaunted by the injustices he condones, the evil of decaying cities and decaying spirits, the evil of an absurd war whose settlement (if and when it comes) can never justify the killing and brutality it manifests, the evil of the millions of Americans indifferent to the malaise of our society.

But why should you be shocked or horrified? Why should you despair in fear and sorrow? This is your country and unless you are working in every way possible to change it, you are guilty, guilty of allowing those forces which seek to govern your lives by threats and violence to flourish and seize power, to murder our leaders, with *one bullet in the shoulder and one bullet in the head.*

Norm Harper



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Music Review

Drugs And Music ... The Mind Mixers

By Barry Klein

It is the purpose of this week's column to propose an interrelationship between today's popular music, the use of drugs, and the formation of political attitudes by college students.

The most obvious point of connection is between popular music and drugs. Almost all of the more avant-garde rock or blues groups incorporate some reference to drugs, e.g. The Rolling Stones allusions to pills in "Mother's Little Helper" or their spontaneous cry of "where's that joint" on their most recent album on London, The Beatles exclamation of "I'd like to turn you on", or the "Acid Commercial" by Country Joe and the Fish on their second album. Of course, "White Rabbit" by the Great Society and The Jefferson Airplane is a classic along these lines. More recently, we see a Negro group, The Chambers Brothers attesting to the fact that "my soul has been psychedelized."

The Amboy Dukes title song from their new album "Journey to the Center of the Mind" asks

if you "dare" take a trip to the center of your mind. This implies the fear of ego disintegration experienced under the influence of LSD which destroys the "walls" which build rationalizations in people's minds.

These same groups who seek to destroy rationalizations often isolate one aspect--the rationalization for the existence of killing and war. Country Joe and the Fish devote one song on their first album to President "Superbird" Johnson, who is "flying high in the sky" but,

Country Joe warns, "I've got a little piece of Kryptonite, yes I'll bring him back to land." One has not too long to wonder what the kryptonite really is, for at the end of the song on the stereo album someone mutters "Yeah, we'll make him drop some acid." On their second album, Country Joe and the Fish sing the "I Feel Like I'm Fixing to Die Rag", which explores the insanity of the Vietnam war by uttering such stark phrases as "be the first one on your block to have your boy sent home in a box."

These political innuendos in the lyrics of pop music occur as often as the phrases directed towards drug use. What effect do they have on college students, if any? Why is a song like Bob Seeger's "Two Plus Two" played so often in the Oakland Center grill? Stay "tuned in" until next week, when this article will be concluded.



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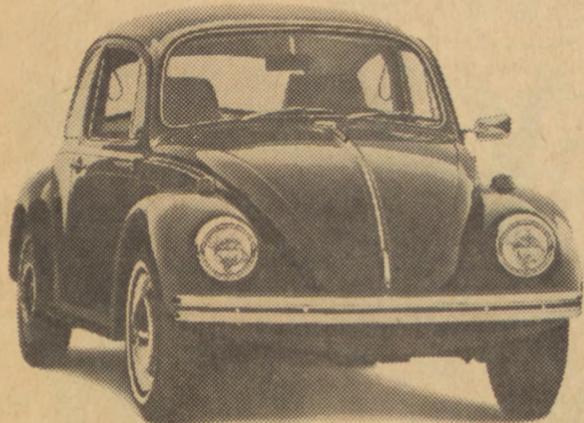
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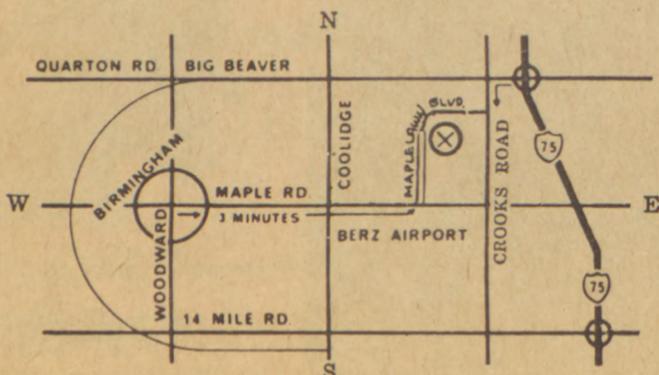
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Student Theatre Opens Spring Show: The "Comic" World of Kopit Revealed

The Student Enterprise Theatre will present their Spring production, "Oh, Dad, poor Dad, Mamas Hung You in the Closet and I'M Feelin' so Sad" beginning tonight (June 7). The play, by Arthur Kopit, could be classified as being in the genre of "black humor." Madame Rosepettle (Mary Gantenbein) lugs her overprotected son and deceased husband around the world; accompanying her are a vast assortment of plants, fishes, and a unique philosophy of life. Her son, Jonathan (Jody Shapiro), is reduced to looking at the world literally through a telescope; however, the drama of the play occurs when he focuses upon Rosalie (Jane Bentzen) who tries in her own particular fashion to seduce Jonathan, possess him, and hopefully to carry him away. Bizarre is the

word for the action in the play, and the characters revolve around the inanely hideous world Madame Rosepettle has concocted to protect herself and her son. Caught in this whirlpool is one Commodore (Jeff Kulik), and assorted Bellboys and Stewardesses (Steve Leighton, Nikki Silvio, Keith Jenkins, Chris Schoof, and James Magon).

Interspersed between the three scenes in the play will be movies sequences which will enhance the overall production, and impressionistically set the mood for Kopit's comedy. Performances are on June 7 & 8, and 14 & 15, in the Barn Theatre. Admission is \$1 Student, and \$2 General Admission. The time is 8:30. Don't miss it!



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"Symbolic Speech" Denied

Washington (CPS)

The Supreme Court has upheld the validity of a controversial law making it illegal for young men to burn or otherwise destroy their draft cards.

In a landmark decision delivered this week, the Court ruled that the government has the power and the authority to prosecute persons who destroy their draft cards as a form of protest against the war and the draft. The Court thus rejected the argument that burning a draft card is a form of "symbolic speech".

The decision could effect the course of future protests against the Vietnam war and the Selective Service System. It also could have the effect of encouraging the government to seek more convictions for the frequent violations of the law.

Constitutionality Upheld

The court upheld the constitutionality of the law, which was passed by Congress in 1965 after a series of draft card burnings, in a 7-1 opinion written by Chief Justice Earl Warren. "A law prohibiting destruction of Selective Service certificates no more abridges free speech on its face than a

motor vehicle law prohibiting the destruction of drivers' licenses, or a tax law prohibiting the destruction of books and records", Warren wrote.

The lone dissenter was Justice William O. Douglas, who argued that the basic problem "is whether conscription is permissible in the absence of a declaration of war." This question was not argued before the Court, but Douglas said, "It is time that we made a ruling." He held that the case before the Court should be resubmitted and reargued.

O'BRIEN'S CASE

The Court's decision was issued to settle the case of David P. O'Brien, a student at Boston University, who was convicted by a U.S. District Court for burning his draft card on the steps of the South Boston Courthouse in March, 1966. The Court of Appeals for the First District, however, held that the draft card burning statute is unconstitutional as a violation of the First Amendment's guarantee of freedom of speech. The government appealed, and the Supreme Court decision overrules the Court of Appeals judgment.

Although the Court of Appeals had declared the law unconstitutional, it said O'Brien was guilty of not possessing his draft card, and his conviction was upheld. In a separate case, O'Brien had appealed to the Supreme Court, claiming it was unconstitutional for him to be sentenced for non-possession of his draft card when he was indicted and tried for burning the card. Since it upheld the original conviction, the Court did not issue a ruling on O'Brien's appeal.

"SYMBOLIC SPEECH"

O'Brien, who was represented by the American Civil Liberties Union, had argued before the Court that he burned his draft card as an act of "symbolic speech," and that the First Amendment guarantees include all modes of "communication of ideas by conduct."

"We cannot accept the view that an apparently limitless variety of conduct can be labelled 'speech' whenever the person engaging in the conduct intends thereby to express an idea," Warren wrote in the majority opinion. Justice John M. Harlan, who issued a concurring statement, said

O'Brien "manifestly could have conveyed his message in many ways other than by burning his draft card."

"BEYOND QUESTION"

The ACLU also argued that draft cards do not serve an important governmental function. Warren again disagreed, emphasizing that "the power of Congress to classify and conscript manpower for military service is 'beyond question'" and the "issuance of certificates indicating the registration and eligibility classification of individuals is a legitimate and substantial administrative aid in the functioning of this system." Warren's opinion listed numerous reasons why draft cards are essential to the orderly functioning of the Selective Service System. Since the 1965 law was passed in the wake of wide-spread reports of draft card burnings across the country, O'Brien and the ACLU contended that the sole purpose of the statute was to suppress dissent because burning a draft card is considered "insulting and unpatriotic." Since this was the intent of Congress, they argued, the law violates the First Amendment. The Court also refused to accept this argument, ruling that the purpose of Congress "is not a basis for declaring this legislation unconstitutional." Warren said an inquiry by the Court into a Congressional motive or purpose would be a "hazardous matter."

OTHER CASES

Many observers are speculating that the Supreme Court's ruling in the O'Brien case will effect the Boston trial of Dr. Benjamin Spock, Yale University Chaplain William Sloane, and three others charged with conspiring to obstruct the draft.

ACLU attorneys representing the five men had asked the Supreme Court to delay handing down any decision on the issues in their case. The Court, however, rejected the request this week, saying it was filed too late for consideration.

The Court's ruling that draft cards serve a legitimate administrative purpose could become a central point in the governments prosecution of the five men, observers are predicting.

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STAINED WITH THE SINS OF PASSION!

ADULTS ONLY



BED OF VIOLENCE