

Children Would Benefit If Teachers Had Tenure

To the Editor:
As a teacher and a member of the Michigan Education Association, I feel constrained to reply to the editorial of Nov. 27, entitled "Pay for Ability or Seniority."

As an objective discussion of the current MEA drive for state mandatory tenure, I feel that it was inadequate.

- Tenure, even in the minds of some teachers, has often been confused with the concept of guaranteed employment. This limited view is strongly implied in the editorial. In addition it is suggested that:
1. Incompetence is not a "reasonable and just cause for dismissal."
 2. Tenure districts have locked in incompetent or unfit teachers.
 3. Teachers who wish to move from district to district may do so without sacrificing salary levels.
 4. Teachers who find themselves in an unfavorable political climate should move.
 5. Since tenure is a common concept in the civil service, a teacher who accepts or supports tenure is "out of the realm of professional people."
 6. The sole purpose of tenure is to guarantee the teachers' position.
 7. Tenure lacks support from responsible public figures.

IT IS ADMIRABLE that you feel that tenure should be judged in terms of benefits which accrue to the children. I feel, therefore, that some of these benefits should be pointed out.

The present tenure act, which incidentally was improved through MEA efforts in the spring legislative session, consists of several parts, only one of which deals with continuing employment.

A major portion of the act deals with the selection and probationary evaluation of teachers, the composition of a tenure commission consisting of teachers, a superintendent, a school board member and a lay citizen, and procedure for dismissal which requires written notice and opportunity for a hearing. There are at least three significant benefits to children as a result of the implementation of tenure.

FIRST, IF a school district carries out the portion of the act relating to the careful selection and evaluation of probationary teachers, not only that district but the whole state should benefit from the resulting upgrading of staff.

Second, discharges of competent teachers or administrators for vague or whimsical reasons are still a too frequent feature of public school employment as witness the equity files of the MEA, where over 600 cases, most relating to dismissal, have been investigated in the past 25 years.

Nor is unreasonable or unjust dismissal limited to the out-state areas. The retention of competent teachers or the fair and impartial dismissal of those who should not be retained has obvious values not only for the school, but the community and the profession.

THIRD, TEACHERS, more than most other professionals, are vulnerable to attack based on the material with which they deal daily. Loss of position because of controversial issues, ill-founded rumor, or even opinions which teachers hold as private citizens is hardly unknown.

One of the characteristics which I prize most highly in American public education is the tradition of intellectual and academic freedom which tenure seeks to support.

Since it is difficult to deal with all of the charges raised, and since those outside the teaching profession may be unaware that many of the listed implications of the editorial are not in accord with all available facts, I should like to suggest several:

1. Many incompetent teachers in tenure districts have been discharged, can be discharged, and will continue to be discharged. So far, I know there is no reliable study to indicate that more incompetent teachers are retained in tenure districts than in non-tenure districts where last year citizens were given the opportunity to remove tenure, it was retained by an overwhelming majority.

2. There are almost no school districts in Michigan which allow a teacher to enter the salary schedule with full credit for previous experience. In the two tenure districts where last year citizens were given the opportunity to remove tenure, it was retained by an overwhelming majority.

3. It seems almost incredible that the editorial writer regally feels that all the teachers in a school district should agree with the local political "climate" whatever that might be. Teachers are precisely the same rights as other citizens and other professionals who do not unethically utilize their position to influence their clients. These rights have been upheld in both state and federal courts on numerous occasions.

4. It is difficult for me to see the equation of private employment with professionalism. Teachers are, of course, already public employees in law and in fact as state hospital psychiatrists, members of the attorney general's staff, state highway engineers and many others. I had always supposed that professionalism had to do with the concept of service, codes of ethics and adherence to a body of specialized knowledge, and was unrelated to who one's employer might be.

5. As is evident from the above, "Complaint."

I'm going to—and stores do need satisfied customers—don't they? Sue R. Ankeny 1690 Ledbury Drive Birmingham

The major purpose of tenure is not to guarantee position but to insist upon sound personnel practices backed with the force of law. It will, of course, always be difficult to enforce good procedures when Michigan issues thousands of special teaching certificates each year in an effort to fill classrooms. However, the MEA is currently developing legislation to promote a state professional practices act for selection, retention and licensure of teachers somewhat similar to that which applies to medicine and law.

7. Far from having little support, the current tenure drive has drawn broad support from many quarters. Governor Romney has endorsed the move as have James M. Hare, secretary of state; Dominic Jacobetti, state representative and member of the house education committee; and Clifford H. Smart, superintendent of the Walled Lake school system, which happens to be a tenure district. Twenty-four states and the District of Columbia already have statewide tenure and approximately 70 per cent of the nation's teachers are under tenure. The courts have consistently upheld tenure acts and the words of the Michigan Supreme Court might serve as an example of their view. Several years ago the Michigan court expanded the philosophy of tenure as a means to "maintain an adequate and competent teaching staff, free from political and personal arbitrary interference."

CHARLES ELIOT, president of Harvard University, told an NEA convention in 1873 that "permanence of tenure is necessary to make the position of teacher one of dignity and independence."

As a community newspaper with many readers who have a deep and sincere interest in the welfare of their respective school districts, I believe The Eccentric might well re-examine its expressed position.

No group seeks more consistent, and with greater determination the improvement of education than educators themselves.

I believe the position of the MEA fairly expresses this majority opinion, and I believe that statewide tenure is a reasonable step toward this aim.

TED CAVIN, Teacher Bloomfield Hills Jr. High School

Sides With Breck Against Rushing Christmas Season

To the Editor:
I was glad to read that Commissioner Breck feels stores should not decorate for Christmas so early. Undoubtedly we have the same store in mind and I was flabbergasted to see those decorations three days before Halloween!

It only spoils Christmas spirit for me and certainly doesn't encourage me to buy.

ALTHOUGH THE city commission is helpless to control the problem, there is someone who can—the customer.

Complaint!
I'm going to—and stores do need satisfied customers—don't they? Sue R. Ankeny 1690 Ledbury Drive Birmingham

Support 'Freedom Walk'

To the Editor:
To me it is a relief that tangible means of expression on the civil rights issue have not been available in the Birmingham-Bloomfield Hills area. I am in favor of the planned "Freedom Walk" in Birmingham, as one way to provide an opportunity for concerned individuals to publicly express themselves in favor of responsible federal civil rights legislation. (This letter signed by the following):

Henry S. Booth, 700 Cranbrook Road, Bloomfield Hills; Nancy Hagle, 327 Southfield, Birmingham; Orchard Lake; Mrs. Robert F. Lewis, 5625 Forman Drive; Katherine Larin, 17965 Kirkshire, Birmingham; Mr. and Mrs. Helmut Heuser, 17970 Kirkshire, Birmingham; Mrs. Harid Chalk, 230 Big Beaver Road, Birmingham; Mrs. John K. Ormond, 31060 Marlin Ct., Birmingham and Harry S. Peterson, Jr., 251 Brown, Birmingham.

JAMES E. Eggleston, 81 Florida, Pontiac; John Kohl, 3010 Orchard Hill, Birmingham; Mabel R. Murphy, 13119 Dorchester, Birmingham; Harold J. Abrams, 287 Oakland, Birmingham.

Mr. and Mrs. Carl W. Menkert, 583 Southfield, Birmingham; Kathy and Honor Oldberg, 762 Puritan Oak Park; Robert R. Burns, 3837 To View Ct., Birmingham and S. L. Aronson, 19745 Littlefield, Detroit.

MRS. R. Hartman, 831 Glendale, Pontiac; Marie Kennedy, 4654 Walnut Hill Drive, Birmingham; Nora Brodin, 540 Troywood, Troy; Cathy Benedict, 2516 Cleswick, Birmingham; Florence Michlin, 31460 Stonewood Ct., Farmington, Robert and Lois Montgomery, 1011 Greenlee Road, Birmingham; Mrs. John Kohl, 3910 Orchard Hill Drive, Birmingham; R. W. Clain, 536 Park, Birmingham; John K. Dumond, 31060 Marlin Ct., Birmingham.

Mrs. James C. Haden, 7100 Wing Lake Road, Birmingham; Rudolph Hartman, 831 Glendale Ave., Pontiac; Mrs. H. J. Sidlow, 25639 Southwood Drive, Southfield; Mrs. A. J. Paoli, 1750 Ledbury Drive, Birmingham; Hiram A. Dorfman, 7257 Pebblecreek Road, Birmingham; Mrs. B. Bodalment, 936 Satterlee Road, Birmingham, and Al Amorosi, 225 Harrow Circle, Birmingham.

MRS. K. J. Ackley, 1090 North-ore Drive, Birmingham; MacKay Taylor, 1452 Wrenwood, Troy; Catharine S. Colon, 536 Park, Birmingham; Patricia M. Burns, 3837 Top View Ct., Birmingham; Deo (See WALK, 8-D)

He'll March On Dec. 14; Will You?

To the Editor:
We who are residents of this favored community have a great obligation toward those who are denied fundamental freedoms.

Giving lip service to human rights is not enough, for it is too easy to love humanity and hate people, and in the process to not only permit injustice but the development of future trouble for our thoughtless selves.

The hate-mongers are at work. Let those of us who think differently, act differently—here and now.

LET US tell the real estate people we neither need nor want their protection from the phony menace of Negroes moving in our midst. Let us tell them, and the public at large, that as there is no superior race, we do not feel racially superior.

On Dec. 14 let us join the clergy of our churches in their religious procession to testify that we are with them in proclaiming and promoting the brotherhood of man, and a square deal for everyone.

I will be there. Will you?
HENRY S. BOOTH Bloomfield Hills

Charges Some Parents Neglect Their Duties

To the Editor:
On the surface it may be true that more teenagers are drinking and smoking; it may also be true that many are not indulging in this conforming pattern.

Whatever the reasons, it is unfortunate for all of us that some parents today are raising their children by mythical standards.

THE TOP TEN MYTHS:

1. The myth that when a child reaches 16, 17 or 18 years of age, the parents' job of guidance and direction is done.
2. The myth that in order to understand your child, you condone his or her actions.
3. The myth that rewarding the child with material objects is an adequate substitute for love, affection and reasonable discipline.
4. The myth that, in order for Johnny or Mary to be popular with good personality adjustments, they be pushed into the social scene of smoking, drinking and going steady early.
5. The myth that following the philosophy of "everybody's doing it" will give Johnny or Mary a constructive sense of belonging.

and the ability to think for themselves.

6. THE MYTH that teenagers are emotionally prepared to act like 21 at 16.

7. The myth that "fun morality" is an adequate substitute for traditional moral codes.

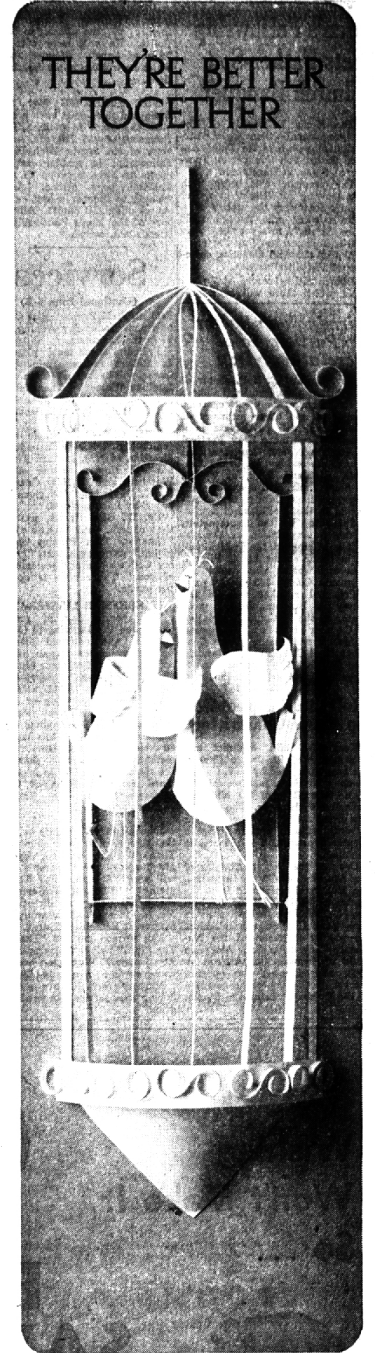
8. The myth that being completely permissive leaves a child with a sense of security.

9. The myth that young people can live a wholesome, purposeful life without any spiritual values.

10. The myth that there are more delinquent youths than delinquent parents.

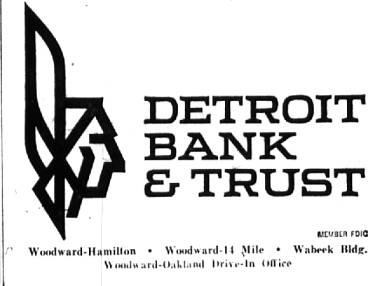
Parents, let's ask ourselves, what kind of society do we want? Mythical or real?
If we want a society with values for our young people, then we must raise our own ethical standards so that teenagers will want to follow our examples.
Let's not lower our standards to follow some parents and teenagers who want no standards at all.
George F. Caronis 544 Southlawn Birmingham

Nov. 21, 1963 THE BIRMINGHAM (MICH.) ECCENTRIC 7-B



CHECK & SAVE AT DETROIT BANK & TRUST

They do more for you. Doing both checking and saving at one place is more than a time-saver. It's a reputation-builder, too. We get to know you and your needs—can give you better service when you want to borrow. Detroit Bank & Trust pays you 4% on your savings in a special one-year thrift account—or 3½% in a regular savings account. Your step-saving checking account can cost you as little as \$2.50 for twenty checks. Any one of our 62 offices will help you start to CHECK & SAVE now!



FREE CAR CHECKUP AND CONTEST FOR AAA MEMBERS ONLY

WIN BERMUDA VACATION

ACT NOW! Contest Closes Nov. 30

10-DAY, ALL EXPENSE TRIP FOR TWO

218 ADDITIONAL PRIZES

Just drive in to your nearest participating AAA Service Station before Nov. 30th for these free pre-winter car checkups:

- Voltage check of battery, starter and generator output
- Hydrometer check of battery
- Inspection of fan belts, hoses and accessories
- Inspection of distributor points and ignition wiring
- Get free AAA winter driving booklet.

OFFICIAL AAA ROAD SERVICE STATIONS ARE LISTED ON PAGE ONE OF MOST PHONE BOOKS

BIRMINGHAM DIVISION
275 S. Hunter Blvd.
PHONE 646-4400 or 566-4729
Douglas Brown, Manager

Open Today!

Come in and get into a Volkswagen.

Sedans, station wagons, trucks and Karmann Ghias—we'll have them all at our Grand Opening today, doors open and ready to go. Come in. Take one out for a demonstration drive.

Things you'll notice along the way: VWs are rattle free, easier to handle in traffic, park in little space. (VW Station Wagons, for example, are 4 feet shorter than conventional wagons, yet hold more and cost hundreds of dollars less.)

Back at the showroom, ask about the VW engine in the rear that will go all day at top speed without strain. It's air-cooled. Can't boil over or freeze up.

Ask to see the parts and service department. Nothing can happen to any VW car or truck that we can't fix.

Then, ask to see figures on what any VW costs to run.

Grand Opening celebration begins at 10 A.M.

Autobahn Motors, Inc.

1765 S. Telegraph Pontiac Phone 338-4531