

GROSSE POINTE CIVIC NEWS

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF CITIZENS ASSOCIATION
OF GROSSE POINTE TOWNSHIP

Vol. 9

JUNE, 1932

No. 12

SCHOOL ELECTION JUNE 13

The annual election of the Grosse Pointe school district will be held Monday, June 13, when two trustees will be elected to the board to fill vacancies caused by the expiring terms of two members.

Charles Parcels, president of the board, seeks re-election, while John R. Watkins does not. Besides Mr. Parcels, there are three other candidates, Ralph Clark, Stanley G. Johnson, and J. L. Hibbard.

Mr. Parcels is president of an investment company and has been a member of the School Board for six years. He received his B. A. degree at Yale college in 1912. Later he was assistant to the dean at Yale for more than two years. He is a past president of the Fine Arts Society. Mr. Parcels, who has four children, lives at 430 Rivard Blvd.

Mr. Clark, who lives at 1324 Grayton Road, is a veteran of the World War and is a member of the Board of Directors of the Seaman-Patrick Paper Co. He has two children attending school.

Mr. Johnson, an officer in the Burkhardt Co., of Detroit, lives at 627 Washington Road. He has one small daughter, not yet attending school.

Mr. Hibbard, an attorney, lives at 1148 Three Mile Drive. He has one son attending the Trombley School.

The polls will be open from 12 o'clock noon to 8 P. M. Following the closing of the polls and the counting of the ballots, the annual meeting of the electors will be held in the Grosse Pointe High School.

Electors will vote at the following polls:

Precinct 1: Consisting of Grosse Pointe Village, Cadieux School, 389 St. Clair Ave.

Precinct 2: Grosse Pointe Park (south of Kercheval), Municipal Hall.

Precinct 3: Grosse Pointe Farms, Kerby School.

Precinct 4: Grosse Pointe Shores, Municipal Hall.

Precinct 5: Village of Lochmoor, Mason School.

Precinct 6: Grosse Pointe Park (north of Kercheval), Defer School.

STATEMENTS OF CANDIDATES

Mr. Parcels: "In the six years that I have been a member of the school board I have done my best to improve the scholastic work of the students. Recent reports show that the teaching staff has reached a high degree of efficiency.

"The school board has attempted to provide educational facilities that will meet the demands of the citizens. One of the reasons I have given my time to this work is that I am a taxpayer and interested in keeping my own taxes within reason as well as those of my fellow-townsmen.

"During the past two years the Board has carried out a strict policy of retrenchment that resulted in a lowering of the budget and of the school tax.

"I am not in favor of the purchase of any new school sites or the construction of any new schools under the present economic conditions."

Mr. Clark: "I have two children attending the Defer School so naturally I am very much interested in maintaining the present high standing of the schools in the district.

"I have owned my home in Grayton Road for the past seven years so that taxes are important to me. I am a veteran of the World War and a member of the Board of Directors of the Seaman-Patrick Paper Co. I pledge myself to a program of strict economy. During the present economic condition I will not support any proposal to build

additional school buildings or acquire additional school sites.

"I have made no promises to any person or group, other than the above, nor will I do so."

Mr. Hibbard: "I feel that school costs are too high and taxes are too high. My objective in school affairs will be for an economical and efficient administration of the whole system and the achieving of academic standards throughout the schools that are second to none throughout the country.

"I don't believe in overcrowded schools or class rooms but I certainly do believe in the intelligent use of our school facilities before we seek to do any more building and I am thoroughly opposed to the costly three junior high school programs."

Mr. Johnson: "I have lived in Grosse Pointe about five years. I have never taken any interest in politics and really know little about conditions in the school system except from hearsay. I have never attended a meeting of the school board.

"However, I expect that my little girl will soon be enrolling in school. I believe it is the duty of a citizen to offer his services for the public good. When Mr. Conely, whom I have known for a number of years in a business way, became a candidate for the school board I supported him.

"It is largely through Mr. Conely's urging that I now seek the office. If elected, I will endeavor to do the right as I see it. I will act in my public duty the same way I do in my private business. I cannot say that the present school board has been extravagant as I have not made a study of what they have done.

(Continued on Page 2, col. 3)

Grosse Pointe Civic News

Grosse Pointe, Mich.

P. O. Address, 466 Larned Street, W., Detroit

Printed as the official publication of the Citizens Association of Grosse Pointe Township, under the authority of the following board of directors:

Lincoln Maire, President.

Charles H. L'Hommedieu, Vice-President.

Henry S. Slyfield, Secretary.

Charles S. Cole, Treasurer.

J. E. Morrison. Henry S. Newnan.

George Porter McMahon

Stanley N. Muirhead

Circulation of Civic News is 5,000

WHAT'S THE ANSWER?

Our readers have perhaps noticed a series of attacks on the CIVIC NEWS just previous to each school election for the past two years. These attacks have not been dignified with a reply in the CIVIC NEWS. To give space and time to endless quibble and verbal combat would amount to a misappropriation of the money contributed by our members.

However, there comes a time when an answer is absolutely necessary for the public to understand clearly the issues involved and the underlying motives back of the organizations concerned.

The CIVIC NEWS is a paper published by the Citizens' Association of Grosse Pointe Township to inform the electors of conditions of civic interest that will better enable them to know their communities. It is distributed free by mail to all who desire it.

There are 650 contributing members in the Citizens' Association, who pay from \$1 to \$35 per year for the support of the CIVIC NEWS. Its membership includes citizens from each village in the Grosse Pointe area. As taxpayers they are naturally interested in keeping the tax rate down as low as possible consistent with good government.

Writers of the CIVIC NEWS study the problems of the different branches of government and of the educational system and report their activities. They attempt to get the truth and to present it in an intelligent way to the public. In its news columns it tries to present both sides of a story. In its editorial columns, it seeks to advise the best course of action for citizens to take.

When a public service job is well done and economically administered, the CIVIC NEWS does not hesitate to praise those who have accomplished it. However, it condemns any extravagance. If the CIVIC NEWS did not do this it would not be fulfilling its obligation to its members and to the citizens of the several communities it seeks to serve.

One would think that the interests and efforts of the CIVIC NEWS would coincide with those of an organization bearing the name "Grosse Pointe Taxpayers' Association." That is what puzzles many of the citizens of the community. And, to some extent, puzzles us.

We wonder why a comparatively small group having 80 per cent of its published membership located within 3,000 feet of a single street in Grosse Pointe Park uses a name for its organization which would lead the average Grosse Pointer to believe that the group represented the entire Grosse Pointe area.

We wonder why they show little or no interest in any municipal or township activity. We wonder why they attack no expenditures save those made by the Board of Education when the greater portion of the public tax goes, not to schools, but to government.

We wonder why they made public announcement that the Grosse Pointe Park officials' method of accepting bids on the waterfront park improvement at the foot of Alter Road was alright when shortly after Judge Fred Lamb in Circuit Court officially pronounced the method unfair and illegal.

Can the answer be that they have an ax to grind?

Can it be that they are obsessed with one idea?

The CIVIC NEWS does not question the integrity of the small group of men who formed the association originally to protest the building of a school in their particular neighborhood. Without doubt, they are men of standing in the community.

But the CIVIC NEWS does question the right of a small group of men residing in a particular section of Grosse Pointe Park, definitely allied with political groups, to use a name which would indicate they are protecting all the interests of the taxpayer throughout the Grosse Pointe area.

SOME FACTS ABOUT YOUR SCHOOLS

1. Elementary School Achievement Test Record.

Average for all Grosse Pointe Public Schools, Grades 1-6:

June 1930—1.2 months above standard for the test.*

June 1931—5.1 months above standard for the test.*

Feb. 1932—6.8 months above standard for the test.*

Tests used: Grade 1, Detroit Word Recognition.

Grade 2, Detroit Reading.

Grades 3-6: 1930 and 1931, New Stanford Achievement; 1932, Public School Achievement.

*Standards for the test are determined by giving the tests to a large number of children in schools throughout the United States.

2. First Semester College Record of Grosse Pointe High School Graduates of Class of 1931 who attended college:

Number of colleges enrolled in.....12

Semester hours credit with A

and B mark..... 44 per cent

Semester hours credit with C

mark 40 per cent

Semester hours credit with D

and E mark..... 16 per cent

3. First Semester College Record of the 10 Grosse Pointe High School Graduates who were Freshmen at the University of Michigan this year:

Semester hours credit with A

and B mark..... 51 per cent

Semester hours credit with C

mark 36 per cent

Semester hours credit with D

and E mark..... 13 per cent

Average First Semester College Record of All Freshmen at the University of Michigan this year:

Semester hours credit with

A and B mark.....40.2 per cent

Semester hours credit with

C mark41.9 per cent

Semester hours credit with

D and E mark.....16.5 per cent

(Continued from Page 1, Col. 3)

"We must have schools. We must provide our children with an education and a good one. It would be foolish for me to say that I could bring about a radical reduction in school costs. During the prosperity wave things went up gradually to a peak, then came the depression. We cannot destroy what has been built up but must make our cuts gradually."

HERE'S THE ANSWER

Interest in the school election has been intensified by attacks on the school board and the school superintendent published by a local weekly paper, apparently without any attempt to verify the statements made. In some cases the statements are merely misleading half-truths and in other cases they are definitely untrue as records will prove.

Quoting from one of these attacks in the form of a letter from the so-called Grosse Pointe Taxpayers' Association we read:

"... While criticised for his economic demands by the Civic News and repeatedly outvoted by his colleagues, he (Mr. Conely) continues to strive for a common sense and efficient administration during these troublous times.

"Both of these candidates (Hibbard and Johnson) were strong supporters of Mr. Conely. While they have been active in the study of school affairs and in the endeavors of the voters for the past several years to correct our troubles and lower taxes they do not seek office. Friends and supporters, however, insisting that they were familiar with conditions and could be trusted to cooperate with Mr. Conely finally prevailed upon them to run.

"* * * Now the community is saddled with a bonded debt of almost four million dollars on which it is paying some \$270,000 a year for interest and sinking fund charges. Schools were needed, of course, and good ones, but the unfortunate impression prevailed on the Board that this was a rich community in which the taxpayer's dollar could be spent at will and that it was unnecessary to exercise economy.

"As soon as Mr. Conely was elected he began his lone fight for a reduction in school costs. He stated that \$50,000 could be saved on the 1931-32 budget last July when it was being discussed. The Civic News promptly ridiculed his statement as sensational. The saving was eventually made."

Mr. Conely is declared to have been "repeatedly outvoted" in his efforts to save money. His own records, as secretary of the Board, will show that out of 140 motions made during the fiscal year up to June, Conely was outvoted only twice. They were on the resolution to permit the superintendent to attend the meeting of the National Educational Association in Washing-

ton during the spring and the resolution to approve the 1932-33 budget.

Of the motions made by Mr. Conely only two did not carry. They were resolutions to make an intensive study of the Junior High School plan and to retain Fred Kirby as principal of the George Defer school at the same salary as he had been receiving.

Speaking of the two candidates, Mr. Hibbard and Mr. Johnson, the statement is made "Friends and supporters, however, insisting that they were familiar with convictions and could be trusted to co-operate with Mr. Conely, finally prevailed on them to run." Mr. Johnson, at least, admits that he knows nothing about the school system, except what he has heard. He has not attended any school board meeting.

The statement is made that the community is saddled with a \$4,000,000 debt. That is quite close. The actual amount of the bonded indebtedness is \$3,987,000. The inference is that the School Board "saddled" the debt upon the people. As a matter of fact, the Grosse Pointe district grew rapidly. To begin with, the school system in the "Pointe" was not high grade. Within a comparatively short time it was necessary to build up a system that was in keeping with the character of the community and that would satisfy the demand of the people.

That it was the will of the people the school board was carrying out in its building program, is evidenced by the record of the voting in connection with the bond issues for school purposes. On Sept. 24, 1924, a bond issue of \$152,000 was authorized by the people for the Trombly School site. The vote was: 160 yes; 31 no; 1 spoiled ballot. The same day a bond issue of \$184,000 was authorized for the Cadieux-Kercheval site. The vote on it was: 161 yes; 30 no; 1 spoiled ballot.

On June 14, 1926, the issuance of \$1,400,000 in bonds for the High School were approved with a vote of 609 in favor, 145 opposed and 35 spoiled ballots. The same day the people approved the bond issue of \$275,000 for the Trombly School with 600 votes in favor, 145 opposed and 44 spoiled ballots.

A year later, on June 14, 1927, the following bond issues were approved by the voters: \$100,000 for the Defer School addition, \$65,000 for the Ma-

son School site, and \$250,000 for the Mason School building.

On June 11, 1928, the people approved the following bond issues: \$270,000 for sites for three schools, the Richard, another to be built on Roselyn Road, and one on Kerby Road; \$140,000 to complete the High School, the Defer School addition, the Trombly School and the Mason School; and \$360,000 to build the Richard School.

Despite the fact that it is claimed Mr. Conely was "repeatedly outvoted" and "must have support," it is later declared that he saved \$50,000 for the taxpayers. If he had been repeatedly outvoted, obviously he could not have saved the money. No one individual on the Board could have done so. Economy and efficiency practiced throughout the school system was responsible for the saving made. Mr. Conely approved the 1931-32 budget twice. First, when it was considered on July 1, 1931, and again when it was reviewed on September 17. This budget called for \$803,875, which was \$71,000 less than the previous year's. However, on May 2 this year, Mr. Conely voted against the 1932-33 budget for \$701,888, which called for \$102,000 less than the 1931-32 budget.

BONDED DEBT REDUCED

The Grosse Pointe Board of Education is in a good financial condition despite its building program during the past few years. The records will show that in the past two years its debt has been reduced \$100,000. To June 1 this year, \$64,000 less was spent than during a similar period last year, although attendance has increased. There are no loans outstanding against delinquent taxes prior to this year.

During the past two years the budget has been lowered \$171,000 in the face of an increase in attendance of approximately 14 per cent. It is estimated that the 1932-33 tax rate will be \$7.05 as against \$7.93 this year.

The per pupil cost was \$170.44 for 1930-31, figured according to the method used by the United States Department of Commerce based on the operating cost. This year the per pupil cost was \$143.62 and next year it will be \$115.29, a decrease of 20 per cent.

CAMPAIGN REVIEWED

The 1932 school election is turning out to be another spirited contest. Both sides are active and are reporting widespread interest. Friends of Charles Parcels and Ralph Clark are promoting small group meetings. They feel confident of victory.

John Watkins and Joseph Fee are in charge of their campaign, and are being assisted by some 100 other workers. These workers are explaining that during the past two years the Board has reduced its budget \$171,000 in the face of a 14 per cent attendance increase.

During this period of retrenchment, they have maintained a high standard of education as proven in the achievement tests of the grades.

There has been constant improvement in the freshman record of Grosse Pointe High School graduates at the University of Michigan. In the past three years, the percentage of A and B marks has increased from 17 per cent in 1929 to 51 per cent in 1931.

Ten Grosse Pointe High School students were enrolled as freshmen at the University of Michigan the first semester of 1931-32. Of the

total number of hours enrolled, 51 per cent were of A and B markings.

Mr. Hibbard and Mr. Johnson became candidates of the Grosse Pointe Taxpayers' Association after Jules Berns, attorney for the village of Grosse Pointe Park and John Kerby, clerk of Grosse Pointe Farms, had withdrawn in their favor. Hibbard-Johnson campaign is being advanced by the Grosse Pointe Taxpayers' Association through the columns of the Grosse Pointe Review. It has taken the form of first an attack on the Civic News. Next an attack on the School Board. Then came an attack on the superintendent. This was followed by one on our school buildings.

The Grosse Pointe Taxpayers' Association held a meeting in the Grosse Pointe Park Municipal Building on June 7 for the purpose of organizing their campaign. Mr. William Hannan conducted the meeting attended by 60 workers. After speeches by Messrs. Conely, Hibbard, Johnson, and others, cards of prospective voters were distributed.

Chairman Hannan told his canvassers that should they forget

some of the figures given at the meeting, as he said he himself did sometimes, to tell the prospective voter that our schools are only half full and that the opposition is trying to build some more. He said that he had found this successful.

Mr. Conely explained that the \$701,888 budget divided by 3,500 pupils gave a per student cost of \$200 and not \$115 as claimed by the board. (In arriving at his \$200 figure Mr. Conely did not deduct the debt service from the total budget which is common practice in computing per pupil cost and is the practice used by his own board.)

Backers of Mr. Hibbard hope for victory on the grounds that the Grosse Pointe Park Political organization with the Kerby group in Grosse Pointe Farms can throw them 600 to 700 votes and that this jump on their opposition will be a big advantage. When Mr. Hibbard ran three years ago, the electors of Grosse Pointe Village caused his defeat, by casting an overwhelming vote against him. Mr. Hibbard's backers hope that the candidacy of Stanley Johnson will overcome much of the natural resistance to him in Grosse Pointe Village.

Return Postage Guaranteed

Citizens Association
OF GROSSE POINTE TOWNSHIP
466 Larned Street West, Detroit, Mich.

Sec. 435½ P. L. & R.

U. S. POSTAGE
PAID
Detroit, Michigan
Permit No. 335

Mrs. B. Vogt,
1304 Grayton.
Grosse Pointe Park, Mich.