

# THE LISTENING POST

## How Do We Rate?

"THIS IS a good idea; let's have more of it." This at least wakes me up to the need for more community participation." This is no record to be proud of."

Such were the types of comments which ASCD members wrote on the questionnaire sent out by the Legislative Committee early in the spring. Approximately 850 questionnaires on membership participation in civic affairs and reading interests had been returned when results were compiled and analyzed. In light of the findings presented here, it may be well to evaluate carefully the activities which are desirable in individuals who are leaders in at least one aspect of community planning. Is an overall concern for the betterment of community living evident in the results as presented?

*To what degree do ASCD members belong to and participate in civic organizations?*

1. 242 belong to the Association for University Women in contrast to 61 members of the National League of Women Voters. Of the former, approximately 60 per cent indicated active participation, while in the latter instance, only 33 per cent took an active part.
2. 135 out of 155 who indicated membership in the Community Citizens Association, participate actively.
3. Slightly more than 100 belong to the National Federation of Business and Professional Clubs.
4. Less than 50 hold memberships in the American Association for the United States, or the Women's Action Committee for Lasting Peace; less than 25 are members of Americans United for World Government; Federal Union, Inc., World Federalist, and The People's Mandate Committee for Inter-American Peace and Cooperation have the attention of less than 10 ASCD members.

The committee recognizes that a large number of the organizations listed were groups whose membership is limited to women. Miscellaneous organizations listed indicated scattered membership in other organizations of a civic and fraternal nature. Comments of members also indicate that such a large amount of time was demanded by professional duties that civic participation was restricted. The question of active association with movements for education and action which lie outside of our immediate professional interest remains, however, and must be examined carefully by all school people.

*What do ASCD members read?*

Says one educator, "Teachers' reading is a sedative." In view of the request that only magazines dealing with the issues of the time be listed, the committee cannot give complete evidence to the point. However, as a result of responses, it might well be asked:

*Does our reading stimulate thinking and discussion? Is our way of keeping up with the news relatively passive? Do we select briefed and pictorial presentation of issues rather than more complete analyses?*

1. Whether one takes figures indicating only regular readers, or uses a total of both "regular" and "occasional" readers, four magazines stand high: *Life*, 801 total readers;<sup>1</sup> *Time*, 704 total readers; *Reader's Digest*, 671 total readers; and *Saturday Evening Post*, 579 total readers.
2. *Newsweek*, *Harpers*, and *Atlantic Monthly* have 498, 473, and 448 total readers, respectively. In all three cases there is a larger number of occasional readers than regular readers.
3. *The Nation*, *New Republic*, and *Fortune* claim 347, 330, and 317 total

<sup>1</sup> Refers to total of occasional and regular readers.  
(Continued on page 70)

## THE LISTENING POST

(Continued from page 57)

readers, respectively. It is interesting to note that each of the three publications has less than 100 regular readers, but a relatively large number of occasional readers.

4. 296 persons read the *Saturday Review of Literature* and 250 the *Foreign Policy Association Bulletins*. Again the occasional reader figure is the higher.
5. *Free World* has 111 readers and *Tomorrow*, 34. More read these publications occasionally than regularly.

*What is the political record of ASCD members answering the questionnaire in terms of membership and activity?*

1. Over 77 per cent are registered members of a political party.
2. Approximately 19 per cent are active in party groups. 58 per cent are not. The remaining percentage was not recorded.
3. 88 per cent voted in the 1944 election and 80 per cent voted in the last state primary election. It must be remembered that the District of Columbia is still without the franchise.
4. Approximately 55 per cent have written to federal congressmen during the past year, and 41 per cent corresponded with representatives of state governments.

*Do educators, by the nature of their requests to congressmen, indicate an immunity to problems not seemingly, related directly to their own welfare?*

1. As many as 420 out of the total of 850 individuals wrote concerning federal aid to education; 273 on price control; and 229 on compulsory military training.
2. 83 expressed themselves on civilian control of atomic energy; 78 on health insurance; 72 on the loan to Britain; and 71 on social security legislation.
3. A total of 30 individuals out of 850 wrote to congressmen concerning minimum wage legislation and 25 on unemployment compensation.—*ISCD Legislative Committee.*

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