

# Community Attitude Survey Results

## Message to Palermo's Townspeople

by Jack Skillman, Chairperson

Comprehensive Plan Subcommittee on Education

The quality of Palermo's educational system as perceived by the public-at-large has a great deal to do with the rate and nature of growth our town experiences. The better the perception, the faster the growth in the number of young families. The poorer the perception, the slower the growth. The faster the growth in school age children, the faster the taxes rise. Without a growing business/industrial base to help offset rising taxes, the burden falls completely on individual households, whether home owners or renters. To some this raises an obvious question about the quality of education the town should develop.

The recent community survey indicates that Palermo's current educational program in grades K-8 is perceived as average, O.K., basically satisfactory with some gaps. If our school stays in the average category it will not cause a great influx of young families. One might ask what is the Town's responsibility to its current students? If one feels that O.K. or just basically satisfactory is good enough for our current students then there is no need to read on or take any action. The status quo will probably continue into the future and what will be will be.

If, on the other hand, one believes that it is the Town's responsibility to provide the best possible educational opportunities for its young people that it can muster, then read on with a critical eye and a positive, constructive view to the observations and suggestions made therein.

Our thanks go to the Palermo School Committee, Principal, Assistant Superintendent, and various citizens who joined our monthly meetings with interest, insight, and useful input. We understand that the school may already be implementing some of the following recommendations.

Our Subcommittee encourages all townspeople to read and review the recently completed survey remembering that the findings represent people's perceptions. There are many insightful observations from all the groups surveyed. It also becomes clear that too many townspeople don't know much about their school. This lack of knowledge should be addressed at every opportunity and by all means.

A note of serious concern regards the high percentage of 7th and 8th graders who appear to have low self-esteem and more than the usual growing pains. Seventy-four percent of all 7th and 8th graders report watching three or more hours of television a night. Could this intensive T.V. watching be because there are no other viable activities for our children?