

## POINTS OF VIEW

# Future bright for our Oakland communities

I have these hopes for our communities for the coming year:

In Birmingham-Bloomfield, that the issues of racial diversity, health education and a lagging downtown will continue to be attended to. But that, in fact, 1993 will evolve as the year of the senior citizen. After at least a decade of struggle, the go-ahead has been given for Birmingham's first federally-funded senior housing complex. Tentative occupancy date: April 1994.

And area residents are in the process of forming a Senior Women's Club to match the longtime Senior Men's Club which meets at The Community House. Birmingham-Bloomfield also is served by Mature Minglers and Birmingham Area Agency for Senior Citizens (BAASC).

In Farmington-Farmington Hills, this needs to be the year for retail

overhaul. The two communities have opposite problems. Downtown Farmington has ambience, but lacks a substantial retail draw. Orchard Lake Road in Farmington Hills, however, has the draw but is an ugly blot on the landscape.

Perhaps Farmington needs to take a lesson from Rochester, which appears to have the most thriving of our downtowns — with fewer visible vacancies and a plethora of charm. (Although it is diminished by the recent unearthing of an historical mural which had hung at the corner of Main and University for 14 years.) But neighboring Rochester Hills suffers from the same syndrome as Farmington Hills, with a series of visually unattractive medium-size malls.

Diligent nurturing of its diverse community must continue to be on the agenda for Southfield and its tiny



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neighbor, Lathrup Village. Officials from both communities, in conjunction with the schools, must continue to be attentive to the nuances, not just the waves of concerns, leasing from residents of the city — both those who own homes and businesses and those who swell the population by day.

My hope for West Bloomfield, my own hometown, is that officials will de-

cide to make a serious study of cityhood. West Bloomfield is too sophisticated an area for continued reliance on the township form of government, which clearly hasn't worked in some time.

As we enter 1993, the city of Troy may be in the best shape of all our communities. With the rejuvenation of Somerset, the implementation of a state-of-the-art traffic monitoring system and the apparent ability of Troy residents to live in peace with the high-rise development around them, this city seems in sync. And even with some problems in its schools and the delay in appointing a new superintendent, Troy students continue to perform extremely well academically — the ultimate litmus test.

Our communities are luckier than many. We've come through the recession without too many scars. Many of

our residents, businesses and officials have had the ability and heart to reach out and help others who have experienced tougher times.

Life in the suburbs of Detroit is generally good. We have woods and waters, safe streets, less traffic than in many metropolitan areas, good schools, a wide range of cultural offerings — and (mostly) exciting sports teams.

What we are still missing is a Detroit that we can rely on for all the vitality that a major central city offers. But even that gap appears less ominous as we begin 1993 with the prospects of a new, more socially conscious national administration and a more constructive mayor for Detroit.

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## Try making job of finding work easier for Bush

As a public service to our soon-to-be fifth living former chief public servant of the United States, for all he's done to (I mean for) us, I have decided to help him find a new job.

This won't be easy because a lot of the jobs have already been shipped to Mexico, Brazil, Taiwan, Singapore, Korea and Hong Kong. And many of the current "American" employers are really Japanese, and they won't hire George Bush because they fear he'll vomit all over his work after the obligatory lunch of sushi and blowfish.

First of all, it's already been discussed (seriously, folks) that Bush should be the next commissioner of baseball. That might sound like a nice

job for him, but after dealing with 435 bandits and thieves for the last four years, I doubt that Bush wants to take on 27 self-centered, childish, ingenious baseball owners, plus Cincinnati Reds dominatrix Marge Schott.

But Bush likes baseball, so maybe Tigers owner Mike Ilitch would hire him to replace Sparky Anderson as manager.

Here he is talking to the press: "Shouldn't a played the outfield. I knew it. My fault. Ball hit hard. Way back. Tram backin' up. Too slow. Couldn't get it. Off wall. Triple. Three runs in. Bad. BAD."

Or maybe Bush could turn to acting. I hear they're making another sequel to "Psycho," and since Anthony Perkins

### RALPH ECHTINAW

has died, Bush would be perfect as Norman Bates.

Or how about a TV program called The New Fugitive? Bush plays a politician on the lam, implicated in an arms-for-hostages deal and pursued by the relentless special prosecutor obsessed with his capture. But wait a minute. That's a true story.

Perhaps Bush could play the title role in The Herbert Hoover Story. I know he'd portray Hoover with a great deal of sympathy, considering how their experiences have been so similar.

Hoover's presidency led to the Great Depression. Bush's presidency left us with Bill Clinton.

However, that might be starting too big. Perhaps Bush should settle for something a little easier to get.

How about used-car salesman? We already know he can sell a bill of goods, sell out and sell down the river as well as anyone. And he could put his foot down when a buyer starts making demands. "Read my lips," he'd snarl. "No new tires."

Failing that career, Bush might try the profession of product spokesman. When a mere athlete like Michael Jordan can "earn" millions shilling for shoes, Bush can certainly make a buck selling a product like, say, tax shelters.

"No new taxes," he'd say. "Really."

But my favorite job for Bush would send him back to the Navy. They could get his old World War II Grumman Avenger torpedo bomber out of a museum somewhere and send Bush on a mission to Iraq.

Then he could finish the job he started in the Gulf War. "I know yer down there, Saddam. Gotta come out sometime. Gonna keep circlin' and circlin'. Gotta packagge for ya in the back here. Big black round thing. Special delivery. Thrill ya to pieces."

Ralph Echtinaw is a county reporter for Observer & Eccentric Newspapers. To leave a message for him, dial 953-2112.

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Ten winners will receive a \$500 award and an additional \$500 will be donated to their favorite charity. The winners will be honored at a special "Senior Summit" sponsored by Citizens Insurance Company in April.

To nominate your favorite volunteer, just pick up an entry form from your local participating Citizens agent or at your local senior citizens center, or call (517) 546-2160 Ext. 2745. Nominees must be at least 50 years of age and a Michigan resident.

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So, pass the buck to your favorite volunteer by sending in your nomination soon!

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