

POINTS OF VIEW —

Education values, drug stance provoke opponents

Boy, did my July 26 column advocating drug legalization ever detonate the hot buttons I was flooded with calls, both pro and con, including an invitation to appear on WXYZ's David Newman show. The Newman call-ins who agreed with me surprisingly outnumbered the opposition three to one.

I even got a call at home from Kurt Weber of Portland, Oregon's Cascade Policy Institute (502-242-0900) because someone from Westland had sent him a copy of the column. Weber circulated it to several other national groups that support my stance.

That column was also used as a play by the conglomerate of conservative elites to scare a certain local school board out of appointing me to one of its recently-vacated seats. This board included some of the same members who "distanced" themselves from my January 1990 educational planning booklet "Telford's Telescope", wherein I had

expressed sentiments similar to those in my column.

These sentiments were shared at the time by no less a conservative than George Schultz, Ronald Reagan's secretary of state.

Despite my 35 years in education and the scores of exemplary programs instituted during my seven years as that board's assistant superintendent of schools, all of the board, except one courageous member named Julie Zboril, claimed they couldn't appoint me because I was "too controversial." (Translation: too liberal.) This past June, I had narrowly missed being elected to that board, but this narrow miss was because of my multi-cultural and values education initiatives during those seven years, rather than due to my views on drugs.

Ironically, most of the board supported my candidacy in June.

My multi-culturalism and values education had nothing to do with my lib-



JOHN TELFORD

It was Alexander Hamilton who warned, 'The people are always most in danger when the means of injuring their rights are possessed by those in whom they entertain the least suspicion.'

eralism. They had to do with what's right. And let me state for the umpteenth time: Despite my critics' implications to the contrary, I am unalterably opposed to minors' ingesting intoxicants — legal or illegal.

I suggest that we try legalizing drugs for adults (concomitant with preventative education and rehabilitative treatment) only because — as with Prohibition in the 1920s — none of our expensive attempts to stop the lucrative and murderous drug trade have worked.

The CPI's Weber claims in his article, "The War on Liberty," that the drug war is indeed becoming a war on civil liberty.

"Michigan," he writes, "is now riding the liberty-bashing bandwagon. Wayne County Sheriff Robert Ficano implemented a traffic check-lane program for drugs . . . and held that (it) didn't violate the Fourth Amendment because all cars were being stopped — not just a random few."

Ficano's rationale would permit every house in the country to be searched without warrant simply because *conspicuously* one was being treated the same. It was Alexander Hamilton who warned, "The people are always most in danger when the means of injuring their rights are possessed by those in whom they entertain the least suspicion."

Weber concludes, "It may sound scary to support drug legalization, but the results are that the same situation applied and reapplied since the passage of the Harrison Act of 1914 is a failure. Attempting to suppress drug usage has created more problems than it has solved. Now is the time to legalize America's illicit drugs."

I concur.

John Telford, a Rochester Hills resident, most recently was assistant superintendent in the Rochester School District. He previously was executive director secondary education in the Plymouth Canton district.

Ford holds forth as a real environmentalist



An environmentalist: Congressman William Ford, D-Taylor, sometimes shows his other side as a thoughtful environmentalist, claims columnist Jeff Counts.

While many congressmen spent their summer breaks politicking, U.S. Rep. Bill Ford, D-Taylor, had different fish to fry.

To be exact, it was elusive tiger muskies in Ford Lake near Ypsilanti. Ford is mostly known to his constituents in the 13th Congressional District as the congressman who helps communities get new post offices; however, he's an avid sportsman who knows how to handle fishing rods and shotguns.

During a recent interview, there was a gleam in the eye of the pipe-smoking Democrat when talking about his recent days fishing on Ford Lake for that muskie.

"My brother keeps telling me they're out there and I keep trying. He's a better fisherman; he's out there more," he said, when asked if he was successful. "We did get some bass, though."

Just knowing that Ford is a sportsman makes me feel good about having him represent western Wayne County. There are things more important than the national deficit, fishing and hunting.

But there are some serious benefits



JEFF COUNTS

to having a sportsman in Congress. They have a natural affinity for the environment, the serious environment, not the one concocted by the Sierra Club.

Ford is aware firsthand of the effect of pollution on the Great Lakes. He spends time fishing for lake trout in Lake Michigan off of Leland, near Traverse City.

He even has a recipe for smoked lake trout. "You've got to cut that layer of fat from the belly before you smoke them."

But Ford doesn't limit his angling activities to Michigan; he's also an accomplished east coast fisherman, plying the waters of Chesapeake Bay in search of bluefish.

"You've got to watch for the gulls; that's where you'll find the blues," he said.

Ford talks with passion about the bay and its complex region, part freshwater and part saltwater. Also, it's controlled by both Maryland and Virginia.

"They've got a fishing dispute there that makes our Indian fishing dispute seem simple. Virginia has banned commercial fishing for the striped bass, while Maryland hasn't," he said, adding: "Telling some of those folks they can't fish is like telling people in the Upper Peninsula they can't poach deer."

Ford said that upon his return to Washington, D.C., after the August congressional break, he would head to his cottage on the Chesapeake for a weekend of dove hunting.

It's no wonder Michigan doesn't have a dove season. It's been proposed, but rejected.

Anyway, there's another benefit to having a congressman who knows his way around a shotgun. It's gun control. Banning assault rifles is one thing, but even the National Rifle Association was a bit confused about one piece of legislation that Ford said would have banned most of the semiautomatic shotguns in his gun case.

"I could help write legislation to do that without banning shotguns," he said.

Outdoing a Texas congressman: There are always plenty of stories about how one congressman outfoxes another on the House floor, but Ford has one story about telling better fish stories than a Texas congressman.

It seems Ford was with a certain Texan, fishing for steelhead on the Manistee River, when Ford started telling stories about past large catches. The Texan was aware that folks from his state tend to be seen as people who can stretch the size of a fish by more than a couple of inches, perhaps as many as 12.

Anyway, at an appropriate pause in Ford's large fish tale, the Texan said: "You boys from Michigan can sure outdo us Texans on telling those fish stories."

And those stories are the flip side of Bill Ford.

Jeff Counts is the editor of the Plymouth and Canton Observer newspapers, who finds fishing stories more interesting than inside-Washington tales. He can be reached at 459-2700.

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