## **POINTS OF VIEW**

## Take action to fight racism, help revive Detroit

here was a meeting recently among area diversity groups. The groups involved share a common belief that segregation and discrimination in southeast Michigan are at excessive levels and are having a debilitating effect upon the whole area. A recent study of U.S. metropolitan areas showed a direct relation between the condition of the core city and area-wide wages.

the constitute of the core city and a least wide wages. Cities that are vigorous had higher wages than their depressed counterparts. In other words, revitalized Baltimore is economically better off than Detroit. This phenomenon extends to the suburbs. That's probably why forward-thinking people like Mike Ilitch are redeveloping Detroit.

Using fear, a common manipulator, certain parties that stand to profit are trying to con homeowners and busi-nesses into relocating farther from De-

nesses into relocating forther from De-troit. To some degree this is working. As Detroit continues to become a hollow shell, outer suburbs like Novi and Auburn Hills are booming. This self-serving manipulation is ex-acting new ones. Inner suburbs like Livonia or Warren stand to lose the way Detroit lost because of "the great white flight" after the passage of The Civil Rights Act of 1964. The flight is now showing signs of resurgence in Southfield.

When will people stop running, stand their ground and say, "No

more!"?
Many suburbanites are dumbfounded about how Detroit devolved. Others, versed in bigotry, believe they know why. The area's core city is seen as a

crime-infested region filled with lazy unintelligent people. I've heard peop comment, "They did it to themselve — "they" meaning African-America

comment. "They did it to themselves"
— "they" meaning African-Americans.
Suburbanites tend to think they
have had no effect on Detroit's deterioration. Ask the people just south of
Eight Mile who drops by to solicit
prostitutes and buy drugs.
Intelligent, articulate blacks are often treated as aberrations in their race.
Whites were startled recently when
Shawn Collins, a highly recruited black
football player, quit the University of
Michigan's team because it detracted
from his school performance. Too
many people act like intelligence is
something unusual for a black person.
Why?

Why?
When the Civil Rights Act was
passed, blacks owned very little in this
country. Their neighborhoods were seriously segregated and their schools
were inferior. Police did not investigate
crime in black neighborhoods with the
same zeal as they did in white neighborhoods. The white-controlled power
structure had little regard or concern
for black America. The black community, starting with almost nothing, was
expected to compete as though it was expected to compete as though it was starting on a level playing field. But in reality the deck was stacked against it by prejudice and limited economic re-

White flight greatly reduced job op-tions within Detroit. It didn't take long for black society, not being stupid, to recognize that the Civil Rights Act made discrimination illegal, but did little to adjust attitudes or ignorance. For many it was just another cruel lie. It didn't take white society long to

**GUEST COLUMNIST** 



SCOTT HEINZMAN

find subtle ways to continue business, without blacks, as usual. African-Americans who went into white communities were routinely harassed by
the local police. Real estate agents tol
prospective black buyers property
wasn't available or quoted them a price
that exceeded the price given to white
buyers. Retailers often ignored black
customers in their stores or else
watched them suspiciously. Employers
found a variety of ways, technically
within the law, to ensure blacks didn't
attain their jobs.

Soon property values in white subinities were routinely harassed by

Soon property values in white sub-urbs seared, making it near-impossible economically for Detroit homeowners to sell their homes and follow the jobs. Economic walls supplemented attitu-dinal walls and the infrastructure for segregation was complete.

It was us against them. And since we had the wealth and power to start with we wore them down, destroyed their spirit and won. Many blacks gave up. They felt unempowered and sank into despair. Hooray for us.

The same attitudes and tactics are

with us today. They're just conducted with more sophistication and subtlety. Now we reap the non-benefits of cul-tural warfare. African-American soci-

tural warfare. African-American society has been conomically repressed. All the side effects of this repression are costing all of us dearly. Prisons, crime, substance abuse, and welfare are being supported by tax dollars. Spiritually the damage is worse. Fear and hate are crippling the whole area. Meanwhile hyporrisy (denial) is running rampant. The poor are accused of bleeding society dry. Yet the accusers refuse to support things that would get the poor working and off the dole. Things like regionwide public transportation or social programs that don't discourage employment.

discourage employment.

I don't believe cries of racism are unfounded. People who own their homes are more likely to take pride in them and maintain them. Yet lending institutions are twice as likely to disapprove a mortgage application by blacks as whites with equal incomes.

On many occasions I've heard white people talk with disgust about all the blacks who cheat the system. These same people will get laid off and collect unemployment, all the while working under the table and cheating the system. Of course, they eventually go back to their job.

Too many white people just don't

Too many white people just don't want to see the whole truth as it relates to the black condition. Blacks comprise 12 percent of the population. They commit 45 percent of the felonies, according to recent FBI statistics. The ignorant are now saying, "See, see, they're a race of crooke!" Except less than 1 percent of blacks commit these

ropean-Americans as Nazis.

What are the well-intentioned to do?

ropean-Americans as Nazis.
What are the well-intentioned to do?
First, we need to accept the problem.
Then we need to accept the problem.
Then we need to speak out against racism and bigotry where we see them. We have to take a proactive approach.
Join one of the many area groups that are dealing with this problem. Ask city officials, businesses, and neighbors to support cooperative programs between Detroit and its suburbs.
Maybe it's time for people at the shop or at social functions to speak out against "nigger" jokes and say they're not funny, that they promote a societal disease. It's OK to tell ethnic jokes "when the ethnic group is accepted and respected in society. African-Americans don't have that luxury yet.
Antisocial behavior is wrong.
Repression does not excuse criminal

Antisocial benavior is wrong. Repression does not excuse criminal activity. A large number of entities in the black community are addressing Detroit's problems from within. Suburbanites have to contribute too. It just doesn't make sense to stand by and abandon a city of one million peo-

pic.

This individual is making a point of going into Detroit and buying products from local businesses as a method of positive support. Perhaps you could take some time and think of progressive ways to help improve our area. And then take that extra step — ac-

Not the state of t

## Some districts outwit MEAP for better results

QUESTION: How do some school districts increase their MEAP test scores? I heard one school district cheated to raise MEAP scores. From your experience, what observations do you have of the Michigan Educational Assessment Test pro-

Educational Assessment Test program?

ANSWER: My observations:
Whenever MEAP scores increase too dramatically, the state Department of Education is viewed as having developed a test that is too simplistic.

Once scores go up significantly on any MEAP version, the Department of Education will develop a new, more

difficult MEAP. This phenomenon occurs about every four or five years. The difficulty of the test (item difficulty) has increased, in my opinion, by about 150 percent since inception in the '70s. The structuring of MEAP test questions tends to follow the flow of the latest educational thinking. For instance, today estimation, problem solving and higher level thinking skills in math and reading are seen as the direction to go to insure students are capable, self-sufficient learners.

This is a step forward for those students who come from stable, affluent or at least semi-affluent homes, but a dis-



ster for those children in Detroit Highland Park and other poor districts where MEAP scores in math are as low

as 5.6 percent mastery.

Those children need highly intensified help in basic and essential skill development, which includes simple math calculation, capitalization and other basic skills, regardless of what the math, reading and science curricu-

Many school districts, sensitive to lower MEAP results over the past few years, have developed a plan to address their low MEAP scores. They study last year's MEAP test, then develop vocabulary lists and learning modules based on last year's MEAP questions.

They "prep" kids for next year's MEAP.

MEAF:

If scores on any newly developed
MEAP edition are extremely low, too
low for public consumption, the Department of Education will adjust and
lower the "cut-off" score for mastery,
as they did a couple years ago. Meaning they lowered the passing score for
mastery because up to 70 percent of the
children did not master the test. Why
did they? One reason was the 4th grade
reading selections, when analyzed,
were found to be at a seventh grade
reading sleed. reading level.





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