

POINTS OF VIEW

In the name of their fathers, sons embrace politics

A few days ago, the past met the future — and at a political fundraiser no less!

As finance director of the Oakland County Democratic Party, I delivered U.S. Rep. Joseph P. Kennedy, II and his wife, Beth, from Metro Airport to the party's annual Phil Hart Dinner, last Sunday, Feb. 13.

Kennedy, D-Mass., the eldest son of the late senator Robert Kennedy, holds the same congressional seat once occupied by his uncle, Senator John F. Kennedy.

As the congressman moved through a throng of party stalwarts, all evidently Kennedy admirers, a familiar face approached to greet the handshaking politician.

When the man was but a few feet away, you could finally read the name written on his lapel: Jim Hoffa. The man, James P. Hoffa, a Detroit area lawyer, is the son of the late Teamster president James R. Hoffa, who disappeared without a trace near a Bloomfield Township restaurant in 1975. Both men's fathers were reputed to be mortal enemies.

When the two men were introduced, the congressman appeared to be startled for just a fraction of a second, but then he broke into a winning smile. Both men talked, shook hands vigorously, embraced and posed for a photograph.

According to Hoffa, as the picture was taken, Kennedy said, "I hope we

QUEST COLUMNIST



ALBERT HOLTZ

don't screw this up like our fathers." While straining to hear the conversation, the writer thought about their commonalities. Both are Democrats. Both had fathers who were killed be-

cause they were outspoken. Both, though from different backgrounds, received outstanding educations and opportunities. Both are famous in their own rights. Both might run for president one day — Hoffa for president of the Teamsters — Kennedy for president of the United States.

Hoffa was to say later, "I came there to meet him. I was touched. It was a wonderful meeting. . . . I was very pleased by his friendliness.

"We both share the same commitment to working men and women," he added.

As the men parted, the writer thought of both their fathers and hoped, wherever they were, they were

smiling as broadly as their sons.

And, the writer thought about Walt Whitman's words: "Political democracy . . . in America, with all of its evils, supplies the training school for first class men."

Albert Holtz, a Bloomfield Hills attorney who practices family and real estate law, has been published in several legal periodicals. He is a member of the American, Michigan and Oakland County Trial Lawyers Associations, the Oakland County and Southfield Bar Associations, and chairs the district court mediation committee. A West Bloomfield Township resident, he recently was appointed by the Michigan Supreme Court to the attorney discipline board.

Respondents — sweet and cranky — are special

We get letters, stacks and stacks of letters responding to our stories, editorials and columns. And we get telephone calls and faxes as well.

Frankly most of the time, they are cranky — taking issue with something we have written. And that comes with the territory.

So I cherish some sweet responses, based on three recent columns.

■ Re: "This Sanders melts away after Valentine's Day" (Feb. 14 edition). Mary Lou Alwood from Plymouth called to say the closing of yet another Sanders stirred up some memories for her and husband Richard.

"My husband and I met at Sanders — the one on the Boulevard," Alwood reports. "I was working at the GM Building; he was at Burroughs. He just struck my fancy. It ended up he knew my brother, so that made it OK."

It was April 1939. They were married the next year. And they'll soon cele-

brate 54 years together.

After seeing the column, they spent Valentine's Day poring over a box of antique Valentines — a legacy from Richard's mother.

"He's now legally blind; I've had hip surgery. We don't get out as much as we used to," Mary Lou confided. "It (the column) really made our Valentine's Day."

■ Re: "Grumpy old men move out to change the world" (Jan. 24 edition). A small band of suburban dissidents was in my hand to write letters to the editor on various issues are now a somewhat larger body.

Organizer Tony Brehler of Livonia called to say 25 people contacted him after seeing the piece on the non-dues-paying, open-to-anyone fraternity they label A.D.C. — short for Another Disgusted Citizen.

And 18 showed up Feb. 9 at Bob Evans in Southfield, where the group holds monthly meetings to share views.



JUDITH DONER BERNE

"I never expected anything like this," Brehler said. "We're going to have to find a bigger meeting place. We tripled in size overnight."

In addition, the grumpy old men were joined by two women (they had been an all-male group, not by choice) and one or two others who had a personal political agenda (who won't be invited back).

"We're not there for that purpose,"

Brehler said. "We're into government responsibility, government accountability. These are people who want to get at those issues — and see what we can do."

■ Re: "Improve education by merging school districts" (Jan. 3 edition).

Tiny Clarencville that schools 1,700 kids from three communities — Redford Township, Livonia and Farmington Hills — was featured as a prime target for consolidation.

That got up the dander of some Clarencville High School students. And their teacher, Micki Scarvi, asked me to come in and field their questions. Then, the journalism students among them had to write up the exchange.

According to a piece entitled "Burn-ing over Berne," Marc Ferretti accurately reported: A handful of pupils agreed with Judith Berne, whereas the overwhelming majority were opposed. In her story, "Fusing flowers," Tracy

Holbrook likened Clarencville to an untended flower: "Standing tall through the years, enduring the cold, the tender rose flourished in the fading garden. Surrounded by overgrown dandelions, the flower grew strong. All it took was a little extra care to turn a dying bud into a cherished blossom."

For my part, I was struck that in this society we consider so mobile, more than half the students in the class raised their hands when asked if they had attended Clarencville schools since kindergarten.

I was further impressed with their well-thought-out questions, yet capacity to listen; their passion for that school district, yet ability to remain polite.

In my head, I still believe in the need to consolidate districts. In my heart, maybe we could exempt Clarencville! Judith Doner Berne is managing editor of the *Eccentric Newspapers*. You can reach her at 901-2563.

Former drug addict undergoes a renaissance

Remember the name David Michael Holifield. No, not the heavyweight boxing champion, although he's the same height and weight, and his body is built like a weapon.

David Michael Holifield is an ex-drug addict newly paroled from an Ohio prison. Presently he's living in a shelter for the homeless near Detroit's Trembly Adult Day High School on Harper and Van Dyke, where I'm developing a counseling program.

He won't be living there long. Impeccably groomed and dressed in a clean suit and tie, David walked into my counseling center one hot day last September and asked for my help. Technically, I wasn't supposed to give him any, because he already had a high school diploma. But after speaking with him at length and carefully sizing him up, I took him across the street to

a clothing store called Off-the-Rack and asked the owner, Richard Jarrett, to give him a job.

I had met Richard through his life-long friend, Cliff Hatcher, the swift leadoff man on Wayne State University's Ohio and Penn Relays champion quartets I anchored in the 1950s.

Richard has a canny cautiousness born of six decades' worth of street experience. "Doc," he told me, "I'll hire this kid, but I confess I'm reluctant. He's a grenade that could explode any second."

Far from exploding, David became one of Richard's most dependable employees, getting paid \$20 a day for guarding the racks of merchandise displayed on the street. In the meantime, I contacted MESC and other agencies, and friends such as Reggie Bradford of Detroit's Club West, Greg Blaney of Vic Tanny's, and Spencer Haywood of



JOHN TELFORD

the Haywood Anti-Drug Foundation to see if I could find David a better-paying job so he could move out of the shelter.

Reggie, a University of Michigan All-American, was one of my all-state quarter-milers at Pershing High. And you'll recall that Spencer is the ex-

NBA all-star whom I had coached in track.

When recently I brought Spencer to my school to speak, I introduced him to David. Spencer immediately offered him a foundation job that will include an apartment in the Brewster projects and a leased automobile. David's Detroit renaissance was under way.

Earlier, I had suggested that David write to seek employment in the Archer Administration. When I read David's handwritten letter, I was pleased to note that he is as eloquent on paper as he is orally. After having a Trembly co-op student type it for him, I wrote a cover letter assuring Archer's people that David, with his reformed reformer's controlled zeal, will make a perfect spokesman for the city's downtrodden legions of ex-cons. David hasn't heard from the mayor's staff yet, but he will.

I also introduced him to Delta Sauls-

berry of Wayne State, who helped him get financial aid to attend WSU. In the first session of his sociology class there, he scared his professor and fascinated some coed classmates with a self-introduction detailing his prison experiences. In many ways, he reminds me of a young Malcolm X.

I have absolutely no doubt you'll frequently be hearing David Michael Holifield talk on television someday. Remember the name, and mark my words.

John Telford, a Rochester Hills resident, is a former administrative assistant in the Rochester Community School District. He previously was executive director for secondary education in the Plymouth Canton district. You can leave him a message by Touch-Tone phone at 953-2047, mailbox 1879.

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