POINTS OF VIEW

Americans are different in their animosities toward each other

ast week, my 17-year-old son, Nathan, and I participated in the rite of spring, junior year. BWa went on the road together, just the two of

us, visiting colleges.

It was an emotional time for me. The symbolism of the journey - driving down the road of life together - got stronger when I realized that the end of the road for Nathan was the start of the process by which he ultimately would leave home and become an independent adult.

So as we stood in the small circle around the So as we stood in the small circle around the student volunteer tour guide, I felt so proud of my fine son and at the same time so protective and so anxious that he do well. Don't interfere, I kept saying to myself as I hung back at the edge of the group; this is Nathan's trip and he has to do it on his cert.

So while he was off talking with the other kids and checking out the campus in the mysterious way that only 17-year-olds possess, I sat under the oaks and watched the Frisbee players on the

greening grass and

the classes gathered

outdoors around the

There were all

kinds of kids. Black kids from the big cities and blond farm boys from the coun-

try. Asian girls with coffee-colored skins and Jewish boys

with yarmulkes tight

to their heads. One had a Palestinian

new spring sun.

How different it would be today, I thought, in Kosovo, where the sky is gray and the mud deen and the hatred and fear between Serbs and Albanians is so savage and sharp.

another green hair.

I couldn't help reflecting as a sat there...

Here are all these kids, of all different back.

grounds and types, all come together at college, that most American of all institutions.

And—so amazing and so American—they are all getting along together. Sure, there were a few all-black groups and a few all-girl clusters. But mostly it was just a lot of different kids, all teachers. together, all having a good time at college in the

spring warm.
How different it would be today, I thought, in
Kosovo, where the sky is gray and the mud deep
and the hatred and fear botween Serbs and Albanians is so savage and sharp. Or in Rwanda,
where Tutsi and Hutu have hated each other for generations and still — even on the far side of a genocide — hate each other with undiminished fury. Or in Israel and Palestine, or between Armenians and Turks. Or between the various tribes in Somalia

The list goes on and on.



PHILIP POWER

It seemed to me, sitting there under the oaks watching the college kids happy and at peace, that what I was seeing before me was one of the truly unique blessings of America. And I nearly

wept with gratitude and, well, patriotism.

Somehow, by some mysterious alchemy, here in
the New World we seem to have a shot at overcoming the historic hatreds that arise and have arisen for centuries, almost literally from the soil of the history and geography the Old World. Once people have moved to a new land, complete with different history and altered geography, it's hard-

er to nurse historic hatrods.

Another part of it, I suppose, is the extraordinary opportunity for all that America offers. A rising tide lifting all boats doesn't require zerosum hatred for individual success

Of course, I'm too old and probably too cynical not to realize that people in America still hate each other, often with just as much passion as each other, often with just as much passion as elsewhere. But plainly what is fundamentally dif-ferent about America is that those hatreds usual-ly arise out of specific personal circumstances and not out of generic animosities that have been nurtured for generations and probably will never be

And so as I sat on the grass and reflected about my son and offered up my little prayer for him and his success, the verses from the base of the

Statue of Liberty rose in my memory:

"Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore, Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed, to

I lift my lamp beside the golden door." Phil Power is chairman of HomeTown Commu-rications Network Inc., the company that owns this newspaper. He welcomes your comments, either by voice mail at (734) 953-2047, Ext. 1880, or by e-mail at ppower@oconline.com

Don't cut what helps people

ne of the frustrations in dealing with governments is to convince them to continue funding programs that

work in making a difference for people.
Years ago, the federal government had a program that would help senior citizens with meeting some of their rent payments. so that the rents would not take more than so that the rente would not take more than 25 percent, letre changed to 30 percent, of their monthly income. The program worked well in our community by helping seniore stay at Baptist Manor and other locations. Late in the 1980s, the program was terminated, despite its success.

Another such program is the state revenue sharring disbursements which unount to about 18 percent of cure site of Parings.

to about 18 percent of our city of Farming-ton Hills budget. This program is financed by the sales tax paid to the state by our residents. Fifteen percent of that cales tax collected by the state is supposed to be returned to the municipalities in the form revenue sharing.
The money is used by our city to finance

such services as fire and police, parks and recreation and other needed programs.

Several years ago, the amount we were supposed to receive was reduced to the point that since then, we have lost more than \$2 million in revenue sharing. Again this year the governor wanted to whack some \$37 million from the state distribu-tion, costing our city hundreds of thousunds of dollars.

Fortunately, the state Senate restored the \$37 million and our state representa-tive has assured us that he will try to get

tive has assured as that he will try to get the House to go along. Now comes the Congress with a proposal to reduce one of our most successful pro-grams, Community Development Block Grants, by 40 percent. This is the program

Grants, by 40 percent. This is the program that has helped our city repair homes in our older areas as well as provide funds for much-needed road ropairs and drain work. On an annual budget of about \$450,000, we've been able to make loans and grants, based on income, to hundreds of residents as well as finance such projects as the Grand River revitalization from Eight Mile. Nies. Mile. Met. of the money is loaned. to Nine Mile. Most of the money is loaned to Nine Mile. Most of the holdey is found internal repairs. The repayment of loans now adds almost \$100,000 to our CDEG fund, which is used to finance addition that, which is a season of the city have repairs. The program has worked so well that the older sections of the city have become desirable neighborhoods in which to live, spurring the building of new homes st of the previously empty lots.

That's the kind of government program

GUEST COLUMNIST



ALDO VAGNOZZI

that should be supported, not cut sharply, especially at a tir

M Fortunately,

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bonsting about a budbonsting about a bud-get surplus. Yet, our Congress has adopted the budget resolution which would reduce CDBG funds by 40 ent or about \$180,000 for Farmington Hills. The city of Farmington would also suffer a similar

oss. If you agree with me that successful state and federal programs that have ben-efited our community should be continued please write to your state legislator or members of Congress to the following

addresses:

U.S. Sen. Spencer Abraham Senate Office Building Washington, D.C. 20510

U.S. Sen. Carl Levin Sanata Office Building Washington, D.C. 20510

Congressman Joe Knollenberg 2349R House Office Building Washington, D.C. 20515

State Sen. Bill Bullard Jr. State Capitol Building Lansing, MI 48909

State Rep. Andrew Raczkowski State Capitol Building Lansing, MI 48909

Aldo Vagnozzi is the mayor of Farming-



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If You're Sick Of Saying It, **How Do You Think Your Pet Feels?**



The Michigan Humane Society's Pet Education Center offers a variety of affordable group classes and private sessions specializing in positive reinforcement for dogs and puppies. Day, evening and weekend times are available for all classes, including

"Positively Puppies," a socialization class for puppies under five months, and "Manners for Life," a basic training class for dogs over five months. For more advanced training, try our "Tricks for Treats" and "K-9 Kollege." Admit it, wouldn't it feel nice to say Educa "good boy" or "attagirl" once in a while?

Classes are now forming at our Oakland and Wayne county facilities. For more information, call (248) 650-1059.

Michigan Humane Society



28829 Greenfield Ro 557-3850