

POINTS OF VIEW

# Cries of racism won't erase ghetto problems

**T**wenty-five years ago this month, the Kerner Commission released its report on civil disorders. The report was commissioned by President Lyndon Johnson in the wake of a summer of violent disturbances in cities across America, most seriously in Detroit.

The report summed up an extensive amount of research with one frightening sentence: "This is our basic conclusion: Our nation is moving toward two societies, one black, one white — separate and unequal."

The report further stated the primary reason for this continuing national tragedy. "What white Americans have never fully understood — but what the Negro can never forget — is that white society is deeply implicated in the ghetto. White institutions created it, white institutions maintain it, and white society condones it."

The commission, a basically straight-arrow, middle-of-the-road group, concluded that only a massive injection of money and commitment could solve this problem. The report gave a boost to Johnson's Great Society programs.

**Ghetto continues**  
History speaks for itself. The Great

Society was trashed by the war in Vietnam and by 20 years of Republican presidents. The institutions that created the ghetto continued to do their work. In 1968 Detroit was 34 percent black, today it is over 76 percent black. The suburbs are only slightly less white than they were then.

Detroit is not just black but also poor, crime ridden, shabby and growing worse with every passing year. It is a city whose citizenry bristles at such "negative" commentary, but the evidence is with us every day. It is there on any drive down any street.

It is there in the newspapers, not because they sensationalize but because they report — and they report that the young travel in gangs, that cocaine addiction is epidemic, that children kill children with guns and rarely reflect on the consequences. They report that the schools are hellholes, that vacant and substandard housing riddles every neighborhood and leads to one fire tragedy after another, that more businesses close than open and that the usual "dangers of big city life" have multiplied at such a cancerous rate that we joke about eating our young.

**Mayor cries racism**  
Detroit is a city that props up a mayor who long ago lost his ability to lead



HUGH GALLAGHER

and who hides behind the cry of "racism" because he's run out of viable ideas.

Racism is certainly the first cause. We, white America, began with 200 years of slavery and another 100 years of suppressed rights. We kept most blacks from attaining any but the most menial jobs. We closed off schools, bank loans, suburban housing and steady income and then accused blacks of being welfare mooches.

Real estate agencies steered (steer?) blacks to substandard and older housing in the inner city or near suburbs. Insurance companies redlined black neighborhoods and charged blacks more for less protection. This abuse is well summarized in the Kerner report,

but anyone who has lived in Detroit knows it for fact without having to read it.

Newspapers did contribute to this. Until the '60s, newspapers regularly carried real estate ads listing white only and "colored only." Newspapers regularly played up black crime and identified black criminals while rarely examining the history of ghettoization that led to crime (not just by blacks but also by poor Irish, Italian and Jewish young men as well.)

But a time comes, as Malcolm X most eloquently stated, that the fact is more important than the cause. Malcolm X said that the black community didn't need the approval of the white community to take its affairs into its own hands.

**Leadership needed**

Detroit cries out for leadership. The responsible, adult population of the city must take stronger action against the drug trade that has engulfed a large part of the city. It must demand a clean police department that fights organized crime rather than being on its payroll. It must bring discipline to the schools rather than excuses. It must decry rather than tolerate reprisals

against whites. It must demand of the white money sources that more be done to help the schools, job training programs, black owned businesses and housing rehabilitation programs.

It is patently obvious to suggest that there is no black leadership. But that leadership has become splintered in the face of continuing racist opposition and the devastating economic situation.

Mayor Coleman Young began with great promise, taking his cue from the traditional Irish political bosses of the early part of this century. He built a fine and, at first, responsive political machine. He wheeled and dealt with the best of them. He worked with the white power structure (especially Henry Ford II) to bring money to the riverfront and negotiated as an equal. He bent rules, as all good bosses do, to get things done.

But time and the frustrations of watching the inner city die while the riverfront grew have made Young an ineffective and bitter man. Detroit deserves better. We can no longer continue drifting into the nightmare of the Kerner commission prophecy.

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# Let's hope trout in the Rouge survive Engler plan



FLIX PHOTO

**The aristocrats: Brown trout are the aristocrats of the fish world, and the planting of them in upper reaches of the Rouge last spring is an indication of the river's recovery from a polluted state.**

**L**ast spring the Western Wayne Conservation Club planted brown trout in the upper reaches of the Rouge River, and as I drive through Hines Park, thoughts of the spotted little trout making their way in the river give me hope.

Trout in the Rouge means the world can be OK around here. Trout are part of the salmonid family and are the aristocrats of the fish world because they demand more oxygen in the water than the more lowly carp or catfish.

Being a snob when it comes to fish, I had little regard for the Rouge until the trout plantings in the upper portions of the river. My thoughts ran to the AUSAble or the Manistee where there were trout, not the Rouge where the lowly catfish and carp live.

However, if we allow John Engler to remain as governor much longer, all we'll have is trash fish and a trashed state. Engler is a small town bozo who is trying to privatize state parks, which really means he wants to turn over our public lands to corporations who will in turn charge us to use them.

Republicans call this being efficient, but privatizing parks and marinas is nothing more than putting the GOP stamp of approval on corruption like they did with the savings and loan



JEFF COUNTS

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baillout. These guys would turn Lake Michigan into a sewer in the name of privatization.

Let's hope the Rouge survives Gov. Bozo and keeps getting cleaner. Just looking at it and knowing the trout are there help me believe spring will show up some day. I probably look at rivers in winter the way golfers look at snow covered courses, thinking how they would play them.

The point here, though, is that fly fishing for trout is more than a sport. It's a state of mind, and it's a state where it's always summer. That's why instead of day dreaming, I envision trout streams in northern Michigan.

It's always spring, summer or fall there, and it helps you survive the grim 35 degree and holding weather of March.

Such thoughts will keep you warmer than romance. I have to admit that on Valentine's Day, my thoughts ran to hearts, but it was the Two Hearted River in the Upper Peninsula.

I first noticed this personal phenomenon when I went to see the movie, "A River Runs Through It." I was more interested in the fishing than in the love scenes; the latter had the standard plot, while the former made the Kama Sutra look like child's play.

Even my reading material has the scent of fish instead of perfume. About the closest I got to a romance novel this

year was "Sex, Death and Fly-Fishing" by John Gierach, which raised a few eyebrows, but shouldn't have. It's about the sex life of the mayfly, an insect. These little guys only live 24 hours, so the romance thing gets hectic. There's no room for headaches.

Perhaps dreams of trout ending out romance are triggered by the onset of middle age, but I don't think so. The world of rivers is more interesting than that of wine and roses. Catching a trout is more rewarding than a never a hangover, unless you go to the bar afterward, and you can always release a trout after catching it. Women tend to want relationships that last longer. In both cases I've always preferred catch and release.

Perhaps we should apply that technique to Gov. Bozo. We pulled this cold fish out of murky, conservative waters in the last election, and now that we've seen his colors, it's time to throw him back.

It's what you do when you catch a bottom feeding sucker when you're after trout.

*Jeff Counts is the editor of the Plymouth and Canton Observer Newspapers and is looking for a recipe for smoked sucker fish. He can be reached at 459-2700 or faxed at 459-4224.*

# Marketing madness clearly carries trend to an extreme

**T**hings are becoming very clear to me now. No, I don't mean I understand the mysteries of the universe, nor am I saying my near-sightedness has reverted to 20-20. I'm just seeing things more clearly. Things like clear shampoo, clear antiperspirant, clear gasoline and clear cola. Now there is even talk about clear beer.

Where will all this madness end?

Contrary to current marketing trends, clear isn't always better. It's great for some things, like windshields, water and sinuses, but for many things it is a disadvantage. Color is a big help in identifying or describing something, especially consumables like soft drink mix and gelatin. It is hard to distinguish one flavor of Kool-Aid from another without benefit of seeing the tell-tale hue. Similarly, Jello is almost always described by color as opposed to flavor. It is simply referred to as red, yellow or green, with orange being caught in eternal ambiguity.

The origin of this quest for clarity is unknown to me. My first thought was that it traced back to Dick Nixon who was always trying to make everything "perfectly clear," but he was quickly ruled out. My guess is that this is a weak attempt to deal with some latent guilt feelings stemming from living impure lives. Clear stuff is pure, therefore it is better for our cars, our bodies, the environment and whatever else. Removing the impurities removes the guilt.



GARY BELANGER

This "clear" nonsense is part of the "light" concept. By adding the word "light" to any given product, we are immediately granted absolution for our dietary transgressions. The typical health-conscious American wouldn't eat even a few ounces of ice cream, but call it "light frozen dessert" and he or she will joyously pound down a gallon of the stuff. We can consume mass quantities of beer, chips and dip with no pangs of remorse, if they are adorned with the word "light."

The term "lite" indicates an even greater reduction in guilt-causing impurities, apparently because we are fewer letters. It is also not a real word so it can accurately be used to describe "clear" or "light" foods that are not real foods, i.e. Lite Cheez slices which have the texture and flavor of those yellow raincoats. Indulging in products which are "clear" or "light" gives the false feelings of healthiness and consumption without consequence. It allows us to ignore or defer the negative aspects of

our gluttony. It's a real '80s state of mind.

It's scary to think where this less-is-more idea will go from here. Will we eventually end up with food, beverages and cleaning products which are totally colorless, odorless and tasteless? Will we lose our abilities to see, smell and taste from sensory deprivation?

If all the products in our lives become indistinguishable, will we know not to put beer in our gas tanks, salad dressing on our hair, or laundry detergent on our pancakes?

Obviously, there is a lot more at stake here than Joe and Jane Public realize. This goes way beyond eliminating artificial coloring and reducing calories.

This may sound like the mad ravings of a bar stool psychologist, but the theory here is this whole light/lite/clear business is a reflection of our inability to make a commitment. We're becoming too afraid of making difficult choices. The L/L/C takes away all the risks. Like most people, you were probably unaware of the magnitude of this phenomenon. That is why the world needs perceptives, insightful columnists to shed some light on this issue to clear it up. I've given this a lot of thought and, frankly, all this "clear" thinking is making me "light"-headed.

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# Financial help is free

**QUESTION:** Recently we received information from a scholarship service that practically guarantees it will find scholarships for our son for a fee of \$950. What do you think?

**ANSWER:** First, understand that any competent high school counseling department can get you the same information.

One family, the husband of a disabled veteran, paid \$850 for a list of scholarships and found they were eligible for a state-sponsored tuition waiver for their daughter. The same information was in their daughter's high school counseling office — at no cost.

Many of these scholarship services claim that if a client doesn't get a scholarship, the client will get a refund. But the small print clause says the client is expected to make a reasonable effort in seeking any scholarship. Reasonable may not be defined.

These companies are in a no-loss situation. They make big money just soliciting salespeople. One sold 17,000 "licenses" to the "untrained" at \$500 each.

But there is money available in many cases, if you do your homework. For scholarship information that no cost, parents should: 1. work through school counselors, 2. study college catalog sections on scholarships, 3. check the public library for their financial aid and scholarship books, 4. check church, civic organ-



DOC DOYLE

izations that parents or children belong to, and 6. check businesses in fields that your son is considering a career.

If you are considering a private college, where tuition can be \$15,000 or more, you should know that quality colleges have a huge slush fund (not stated as scholarship money in their catalogues) for parents who can show a very minimal need.

Got a meeting with whoever makes the decision — be it the academic or the financial dean and "cry."

What I am saying is think twice before paying \$1,000 for a scholarship service, follow the steps I've outlined, be informed and work closely with your high school. Good luck.

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