

POINTS OF VIEW

Crisis peaks between Detroit, suburbs

What is the future of Detroit? And can that future be separated from the future of Southfield, Birmingham, Livonia and all the other suburbs?

These two questions are not academic. We who live in the metropolitan Detroit area worry about them all the time. Our lives, our families and our work depend on the answers. And the upcoming mayoral election in the city dramatizes the crisis. The departure of Coleman Young from political power may be the opportunity to usher in a new era of cooperation between Detroit and its suburbs.

Detroit was once one of the "boom towns" of America, a desirable place to make a living and raise children. It was the leading industrial city of the United States, where education, housing and recreation were wonderful supports of postwar prosperity. It was not as exciting as New York or as beautiful as San Francisco. But it was safer, cleaner and more comfortable than most of its urban counterparts.

The coming of the automobile changed the world — and Detroit. Starting with a medium-size manufacturing town specializing in steel, shipbuilding, railroad cars, drugs, cigarettes and shoes, the manufacturers of

the motor car turned our city into the mother of the assembly line and the father of the monster factory. Ford made it possible for an upper class toy to become an instrument of mass transportation. Detroit became a one-industry town, powerful and vulnerable.

The automobile brought thousands of "immigrants" to Detroit. It changed the ethnic face of our city. The Yankers, Germans and Irish gave way to the Poles, Italians and Eastern Europeans. The blacks of the South poured into their racial ghettos and confronted white hostility. The language and color of Detroit became radically different from what they were before.

In time, affluence, the automobile and racism destroyed the city. Suburbia became affordable and accessible. Expressways made travel easy and shopping centers replaced downtown. Running away from blacks became a white obsession. Detroit lost the rich and the middle class and kept the poor. The school system declined. The infrastructure decayed.

In the midst of all this turmoil, the automobile found alternative places to be manufactured. Factories closed. Jobs disappeared. Unions shrank. Unemployment and welfare became the reality of inner city living. Drugs and crime followed poverty. Families fell



RABBI SHERWIN WINE

apart. Teenage mothers became commonplace. The downtown seemed irreversible.

When blacks and Coleman Young came to power, the decline of the city sprang up in the suburbs, white and prosperous. Terrified by what was happening in the city, it turned its back on the old Detroit and invented the isolation of suburban existence. In a short while the separation was made complete by total fear and distrust.

The Young years have been two decades of continuous decay. The population has declined. Residential streets have been turned into wastelands. Crime and violence hold entire neighborhoods captive. Neither the building

of the Renaissance Center nor the restoration of the Fox Theater have altered the steady disintegration of the city. Even the black bourgeoisie are beginning to flee. And without the middle class — whether white or black — Detroit cannot be a viable community.

Is all of this development Young's fault? Has his abrasive anti-white, anti-suburban rhetoric been responsible for suburban hostility? Would things have been different had he spoken and behaved differently? I doubt it. In a time of recession and de-industrialization, talking nicely to whites does not create jobs and money.

What is clear, however, is that the decay of the old Detroit must ultimately affect the morale and the quality of life of the new Detroit. The suburbs cannot be whole so long as the core is rotten. And what is also clear, is that nothing can be done to make things better without the active cooperation of city blacks and suburban whites. The successor to Young will be helpless unless old Detroit and new Detroit can see themselves as part of the same urban enterprise.

What can we do to turn confrontation into cooperation?

We can start thinking of ourselves as Detroiters, whether we live south of Eight Mile Road or in the suburbs. We

can take responsibility for our urban destiny. And responsibility means that we reject both cynicism and illusion. We want to face the facts, but we refuse to give up hope.

It is in that spirit that three Jewish congregations of Metropolitan Detroit, Congregation Beth Shalom, Temple Shir Shalom and The Birmingham Temple have come together to do something about this crisis. The first step is useful dialogue.

The first event of our newly founded Intercongregational Forum is called Detroit and Its Suburbs: Confrontation or Cooperation. It will be a formidable event, with Don H. Barden, Maryann Mahaffey, Ed McNamara, and L. Brooks Patterson — and three rabbi interrogators: David Nelson, Dannel Schwartz and yours truly.

Our program at 8 p.m. Monday, Oct. 25, at Birmingham Temple is an opportunity to make an important statement. The Jewish community of greater Detroit cares about the future of Detroit. This is our home, and we need to do something to save it.

Sherwin Wine is founder of the Jewish Humanist movement and rabbi of Birmingham Temple in Farmington Hills. He is a Birmingham resident.

Engler's DNR plan is something to grouse about

The six wild Canada geese were cooking in the Paul Bunyan sized frying pan. My contribution to dinner was one brook trout and a bottle of Jack Daniels. I tossed the cap in the fire. It wouldn't be needed again.

The passing around of the Jack Daniel's among five geese and ruffed grouse hunters helped stories about the state Department of Natural Resources flow. All were for Gov. John Engler's plan to split the DNR into two agencies, one which would worry about grouse and the other about environmental problems.

However, other moose and geese folk I've talked to don't like the plan. The question is as murky as the Rouge River. The DNR has done a good job of managing our resources, and at a pretty cheap price. We've got some of the best trout streams in the country, and the price of our fishing licenses is still

about 20 bucks.

Grouse, pheasant and woodcock hunting is still a bargain, with a small game license costing less than \$10. For that price you've got the chance to roam through acres of public land.

Those are bargain prices when compared to Michigan schools, which brag about how much they spend on each kid. Schools are the only institutions that brag about inefficiency. At \$4,500 per kid and more in suburban Detroit, it doesn't come cheap.

And the irony is that when you plug less than \$10 down for a small game license, the chances of bagging a ruffed grouse are much better than those that your kid will be taught to read for \$4,500. And this comes in a year when the ruffed grouse population is down by as much as 30 percent.

Those ready to shoot, mount and hang the current DNR over Engler's fireplace like a deer head are coming



JEFF COUNTS

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out of the yuppie school of business — quicker, faster and cheaper.

They complain the environmental side of the DNR takes too long to issue permits, drags projects out and generally makes it more expensive to operate business in Michigan.

I read a newspaper column by one of these types in a downtown Detroit paper recently that "ruffled" my feathers. The columnist kept referring to "ruffed" grouse. It's ruffed grouse as anyone who has stepped out of doors in Michigan during the fall knows.

A "ruffed" grouse is an irritated one. And that's what all of us who love Michigan's out of doors should be with the yuppie business mindset about Engler's plan.

Sure, the DNR is filled with the same dumb bureaucratic problems

we all face, and there are as many inefficiencies as in the schools.

Getting rid of those problems should be like ridding a Michigan trout stream of sea lamprey: Poison it to kill the blood suckers, not the trout.

To do it right, you put the poison in the hands of an experienced conservation worker, not a yuppie business type who doesn't know grouse from sushi.

Engler's plan to reorganize the DNR may be fine, but I'm just afraid he's going to turn it over to the sushi eaters, not those who know a ruffed grouse from a "ruffed" grouse.

Jeff Counts is the editor of the Plymouth and Canton Observer newspaper, who rarely hits either a grouse or a woodcock, but who does know how to open a bottle of Jack Daniels. He can be reached at 459-2700.

Control issue may squelch governor's school fund plan

Stripped to the core, Gov. John Engler's plan for school funding seeks to replace a patchwork of locally voted taxes for education with a state-funded "one size fits all" system.

Here's how:

In the governor's plan, all districts would receive a minimum of \$4,500 per pupil in state aid. Districts now spending between \$4,500 and \$5,500 would get a 2 percent increase next year, while those spending up to \$6,500 would get a 1 percent increase.

School districts spending more than \$6,500 per pupil — 35 in all — would get \$5,500 from the state and be allowed the local option of voting additional property taxes.

A fair number of readers have called this newspaper and complained bitterly about the governor's plan "destroying local control of our schools."

There's some justice in this charge. One of the first things families with children do when they consider buying a new home is look at the quality of the local school system. In general — and there are many exceptions — the more local voters have been willing to tax themselves in school millages, the better their schools are.

So people shopping for a house can express their economic and educational choices by choosing a home in one district (with one tax level) but not another (with another tax level).

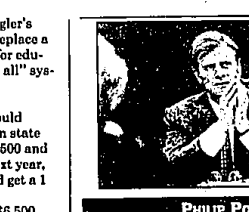
What's wrong with that?

None to the point, what's wrong with the idea of asking people if they're willing to pony up their tax money to support good schools for their kids? You pay your money and you make your choice.

You can't do that under the governor's proposal, unless you live in the top-spending 35 districts.

I suspect there are a lot of people outside the top 35 districts who care about their schools and the education of their kids and who like the idea of being given a choice in the matter of voting for or against school millages. And I hope there will be a big movement in the Legislature to give more districts their own voices.

More than that, though, Engler's "one size fits



PHILIP POWER

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all" plan ignores the reality that there are really three different economies in Michigan, each with differing price and cost-of-living levels:

- The suburbs around Detroit, where costs of everything are nearly a quarter higher than they are in the rest of the state.
- Outstate cities like Lansing and Kalamazoo, where prices are in the middle.
- Rural areas like the Thumb and the UP, where everything costs less.

One way to address this reality and yet bring up spending in really poor districts is for the state to give all districts a per-pupil base grant below which no district is allowed to sink, and allow all districts to vote for local enrichment.

This improves the life of the poor but doesn't damage the rich — not a bad combination.

Phil Power is chairman of the company that owns this newspaper. His touch-tone phone number is (313) 953-2047, mailbox 1880.

RK SURGERY

INFORMATION BULLETIN

RK Surgery is short for Refractive Surgery. It is a surgery for myopia or nearsighted people to potentially eliminate the need of eye glasses or contact lenses. It is performed in an office outpatient setting without the use of laser. Laser Refractive Surgery is performed with an Excimer Laser and is called Photo Refractive Keratoplasty and is also performed as an outpatient.

The Michigan Eyecare Institute feels this is a wonderful procedure for thousands of people but not all people are candidates.

The doctors at the Michigan Eyecare Institute have had more years of experience with RK Surgery and Excimer Laser Surgery than any other doctors in the midwest. Dr. Myers is the first doctor currently practicing in Michigan to have performed the procedures. Dr. Myers and Dr. Rubinstein are the first doctors in Michigan to have performed any type of surgery with Excimer Laser.

The Michigan Eyecare Institute recommends if you are contemplating Refractive Surgery to investigate how many years the doctor you are electing to perform the procedure has been doing it and how many patients they have performed it on. Also you may ask how many lectures and papers they have written concerning their data, results and methods.

The doctors of the Michigan Eyecare Institute have lectured internationally about Refractive Surgery and Excimer Laser Surgery and have taught the procedures to other ophthalmologists for 15 years and welcome you to visit their offices for a consultation or free evaluation as to whether you or your family members or friends are a candidate for the procedure.

Please cut this bulletin out and use it for a reference if you are contemplating Refractive Surgery. The Michigan Eyecare Institute has 4 offices in Southeastern Michigan. Call 1-800-676-EYES for further information.

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