

POINTS OF VIEW

# Educate all our kids, not just the privileged

Last week, as his three intended killers came in the front door, I smuggled a student out a back exit of the adult high school on 7630 Harper Avenue at Van Dyke where I'm developing a counseling program. He had sold this revenge-best trio of foiled drugs — not a good idea in the inner heart of Detroit, where young men are routinely murdered for far lesser offenses.

As I drove him fast down a glass-strewn alley and away from the battered old school toward safe transfer to a night school, I warned him to stay away from Harper and Van Dyke indefinitely, day or night. This is a corner where a methadone clinic looms, drug deals go down in the street in broad daylight, and gunfire, sidewalk gambling, narcotics use and other illegalities proliferate in plain sight.

Driving back to my office after dropping him off, I anguished for the thousandth time over what we in Michigan have stood by and allowed to happen to our young people's future — not only with regard to our inner-city public-school populations, but to public students in general. Politicians and bureaucrats drone interminably about tuition and transportation vouchers and "empowered" schools and privatized management and "remaking our educational system."

The real question remains: How willing are we to try to educate all of our children, rather than the privileged 33 percent we've been fully educating thus far? To successfully educate everyone for a linguistically and technologically demanding future, we must restore the \$6 billion, which was recently robbed from the state's schools — "rich" and poor alike. We also must extract con-



JOHN TELFORD

siderably more from the taxpaying public and allocate it to the neediest districts.

When my staff designed a high school "alternative center for education" (which I christened "ACE") in Rochester, I poured hundreds of thousands of "extra" dollars into it. Conversely, ghetto "alternative centers" usually get less — not more — of

their own district's money. And these districts themselves have already been shortchanged in light of most of their students' desperate needs.

Meanwhile, professional athletics, pop music and other kinds of opiate have become the priorities of too many Americans. In ancient Rome, the idle and besotted rich called similar palliative pastimes "bread and circuses." These were designed to appease an equally idle and drunken proletariat. You'll recall what happened to Rome soon thereafter. George Santayana warned that those who can't learn from the past are condemned to repeat it.

The expensive bread-and-circus cycle can be broken, but only if we as a state and a nation demonstrate the will to do it. After restoring every cent of the \$6 billion (via the income tax) and then taxing ourselves yet further (via the sales tax) for additional money to

distribute to the neediest districts, our next step should be to ensure that every district maintain measurable and reasonable outcomes students must attain to advance from grade to grade.

A concomitant step is to eradicate the drug trade. (In other columns, I have outlined ways to do this.) Then and only then will millions of young men like my back-alley passenger and his pursuers stay alive, sober, and out of jail or off the dole. Thus they'll become job-holding contributors to the legal economy and bolster your social security — instead of threatening it and your life and the very survival of our republic.

John Telford, a Rochester Hills resident, was an assistant superintendent in the Rochester School District. He previously was executive director for secondary education in the Plymouth Canton district.

# State humane society should go back to the dogs

"People feel very intimidated by someone dressed in camouflage, wearing face paint and holding a weapon in their hands. To dismiss that out-of-hand is ignoring reality."

—Gary Tiscornia, executive director Michigan Humane Society, speaking in a Detroit daily newspaper

Okay pal. If that's the way the Humane Society looks at the world, you won't get any more of my money. I'll be checking to see if the United Way donates any to you guys, and if it does, I'll deep six my donation card and put the money in the Salvation Army kettle.

I'd even rather give my money to my local anti-hunting friend Mike Chindo, even though he spends an occasional weekend harassing hunters. Chindo, of Plymouth, makes intelligent arguments against hunting. He's fun to talk to.

The reason for this is that the comment from the Humane Society goes past purely being anti-hunting and gets into the politically correct new thinking that's as dangerous as the propaganda spread by the Nazis.

The guy from the Humane Society is basically setting up the ground work to start a hate campaign against people who wear camouflage. Any similarities to Germany in the 1930s are welcome.

It's interesting to note that Hitler was a vegetarian and an anti-hunter who called beef soup carcass tea.

As a hunter and fisherman, I don't mind people taking aim at my activities because they object to them on a moral basis. However, the Humane Society crossed the Mason-Dixon line and is becoming like the old KKK by trying to create the stereotype of a hunter as a person who wears camou-



JEFF COUNTS

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flage, paints his face and is to be feared because he is carrying a weapon.

If we transferred such a description to any ethnic or racial group, we would have headlines the size of a rack on a 12-point buck and more suits than a New York law firm. And for good reason. A hate campaign turns to violence at some point.

Also, the Humane Society's implication that a camouflage-wearing, gun-carrying hunter is "intimidating" ignores reality.

The chance of getting shot by a stranger is higher when driving on a Detroit area freeway than of catching a few pellets from a shotgun fired in the sky by a duck hunter. In other words, that little old lady driving the economy car next to you on the Jeffries Freeway probably has a .357 magnum under her seat and is ready to use it. Hunters, on the other hand, are more interested in

mallards than motorists.

But it's easier for the Humane Society to pass off the big lie about hunting than to accept the truth. The first step in the big lie as the Nazis practiced it was to stereotype a group of people. That then leads to banning their activities and eventually to turning them into criminals who must be jailed.

It's time for the Humane Society to go back to worrying about dogs and cats. They're on much firmer ground in that area. Once you start trying to censor the way people dress and in which activities they engage, you may just as well start wearing a brown shirt and marching with the skin heads.

Jeff Counts is the editor of the Plymouth and Canton Observer Newspapers who owns two camouflage hats. He can be reached at 459-2700.

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