

POINTS OF VIEW

Suburbs must support Detroit's rejuvenation

I began writing columns in this newspaper supporting him over a year ago, after a long meeting with him. I attended fund-raisers for him and helped organize another — at Yoon Sil Cho's lavish Hoy Tin restaurant in the towering River House off Jefferson Avenue on moonshimmering Marina Drive.

There I introduced him to a large crowd that included hundreds of my cohorts — black and white, new and old. Later that night I rejoined him at a private Southfield dinner with greater Detroit's Korean community leaders, where he punctuated a speech with meticulously-pronounced Korean phrases which drew delighted cheers.

I coaxed him into Detroit's grassroots adult day high school to address hundreds more — the needful students and staff I'm presently counseling there.

Now what I so fervently wished for will come to pass. The man so many of us worked so hard for has become mayor-elect of the bleeding, beleaguered

city where I was born and raised — drug-ravaged and bullet-riddled now, and all but abandoned by its resident corporations and its once-predominant middle class.

And, make no mistake, Dennis A. Archer will ride hard to its rescue. I haven't been so excited over a political figure since the bright, brash days of Bobby Kennedy.

So why am I still uneasy? Is it because some people insinuate that the Clinton Administration will offer Detroit lip-service rather than real assistance? Definitely not. Is it because I fear this fresh changing of the guard is just a dream I'll waken from only to find Coleman Young still holding the Motor city in his hopeless hamster-lock? No. Is it because I'm unsure whether Dennis can recruit an extensive team as cerebral and incorruptible as he is himself? Maybe. Is it because I fear it will take years to undo the Young regime's damage? Perhaps. Is it because I'm afraid Detroit's drug trade must be obliterated before anything



JOHN TELFORD

else can happen there that isn't bad? Possibly. Is it because the city's neglected schools have further degenerated? Debatable.

Or is it because I'm worried that even the few careful promises the mayor-elect made campaigning can't be fulfilled due to gridlocking civil-service regulations and scarce municipal funds? Probably. And is it also because the suburbs, finally forced to put their money where their mouth is now that King Coleman is gone, will find some other excuse not to support his succes-

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sor's rejuvenation efforts — especially a long-overdue move to fuse urban with suburban public transportation? Definitely.

But even these latter two worries aren't what makes me uneasy. What makes me uneasy is the moral maggotry which, during the past three dec-

ades, has invaded every nerve and neuron of our societal psyche. Such decay is now so widespread that Detroit's problems are a mere symptom of a monstrous sickness infesting our once morally-mighty land with vast, rapping, rapacious cankers of ethnocentrism, apathetic ignorance, self-indulgence, and sheer, dishonest greed.

We must excise this cancer from bottom to top before a great reformer like Dennis Archer will be empowered to fully work his magic. John F. Kennedy said, "Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country." If America's multicultural democracy is to prevail, it's high time to heed JFK's words once more and truly apply them within our nation, our state, our city, and ourselves.

John Telford, a Rochester Hills resident, was an assistant superintendent in the Rochester School District. To leave a message for him from a Touch-Tone phone, dial 953-2047 mailbox number 1879.

Time to save endangered species, the hunter

He was nimble, for an old guy. He jumped off his pickup truck and helped stack the wood he was delivering. He doesn't come to the Detroit suburbs often, this year even less. There's that prostate problem.

Over coffee he talked of buying his Washneten County farm in the 1950s from his father, as though it was yesterday. "I didn't do any crops this year cause of my problem," he said in that matter-of-fact country style that doesn't emphasize the pain, just the fact that there would be no soybeans this year. "I've got some good squash though."

Deer hunting came up. His eyes lit up like a seven-year-old. He was going this year, just like he has every year since World War II.

For him deer hunting is an extension of his life, a few days away from the grinding work of farming. And the killing? It's no different than taking a few pigs to the butcher, just part of it. In fact, after delivering my wood, he was

headed to Farmington to pick up venison sausage.

I said I'd be heading to the Upper Peninsula for a deer hunt, my first. Again his eyes had the glow of a kid's. "The Upper Peninsula, eh. What town?" I told him. "I've wanted to get up there," he said.

It made me wonder. Here's a guy who has plenty of deer on his property, but still has a romantic vision of hunting in the Upper Peninsula. Perhaps it eases the pain of his medical problem.

I thought of my farmer friend a few days later while reading a newspaper story about the decline of hunting and its possible extinction in the next century. It seems that young, urban men aren't taking it up like their fathers. It's sad. Without hunting and fishing we fall into the fan syndrome, sitting while stupidly watching sporting events and politicians and turning to MTV or sitcoms for relief.

Hunting and fishing give us a way to participate in life and death, and give



JEFF COUNTS

us stories to tell. One writer suggests that we hunt and fish just so we have stories.

He's probably right. Look at a couch or bar full of football fans. Everybody has seen the big play at least five times in living color and it will be quickly forgotten, despite efforts by the sports writing establishment to make us care about the agony of million dollar babies.

We remember our first fish or deer,

but not our first football game.

While the anti-hunting folks are jumping with joy over the possible extinction of the hunting species, I'm not. When the last deer hunter hangs up his rifle, we'll have lost something, a tradition that has extended back to cave man days.

We'll lose people like my friend, the farmer. My family and I are richer people for having met him and others in travels through Michigan over the years.

And they all don't have to be hunters or fishermen. There was that delightful 70-plus year old woman whom I found my wife talking to on the bank of the Black River. She, like my wife, has spent years sitting in lawn chairs near Michigan rivers waiting while her husband fished. He was a little slower getting in and out of the rivers these days, but that just gave her more time to read county maps and pick out places to visit.

As it turned out, she was the cousin

of Michigan author John Voelker who wrote "Anatomy of a Murder," and two wonderful trout fishing books, "Trout Magic" and "Trout Madness."

Then there was the woodcock hunter on the Jordan River. He was an older guy with a 12-year-old English setter who was standing on the river bank watching our unsuccessful efforts to catch steelhead.

I climbed out of the river to talk. We compared setters and sons, my two were still in the river fishing and the dog was in the car.

He gently said: "There aren't any steelhead in the river any more," paused, looked at my sons fishing, and added, "Or does that matter?"

It didn't and he knew that. I just hope I'm not around when guys like him become extinct.

Jeff Counts is the editor of the Plymouth and Canton Observer Newspapers and is bucking the trend by taking up deer hunting at the age of 45. He can be reached at 459-2700.

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