### **POINTS OF VIEW**

# Where are our values going?

y my count, most Michigan stores started taking down their Christmas decorations knows — especially kids — that th post-Christmas sales start on Dec. 26. at midnight on Dec. 25. Everybody

). By biblical count, it took 12 days for the wise men to travel to Beth-lehem to pay homage to the infant Jesus. Although relatively few know it, that's the origin of the "12 days of Christmas," which ended last week on Jan. 6.

last week on Jan. 6.
Score a small one for the progressive secularization and commercialization of our society.
More insidiously, consider the kids at Scotch Elementary School in West Bloomfold. Holiday decorations in the school halls this seament week and the progressive of Done the union. son consisted of Dana, the unisex form life-sized snowperson, who collects donations for needy fami-

lies.

According to a story in the
Detroit Free Press, Donald Cohen,
director of the Michigan AntiDefamation League, says, "It's best
for schools not to focus on religion or any one particular holiday at this time of year. The only reason able way to deal with the holidays at school is as a secular or seasonal activity.

Score a big one for the progres-sive purging of values from our cul-

Holidays are tough for schools School officials are afraid of offend-ing parents. They don't want to exclude children who don't celebeste mainstream holidays. And they are scared of being sued by violating the constitutional separa tion of church and state.

tion of church and state.
When I was growing up, schools
without a second thought wholeheartedly embraced Christmas as
an accepted holiday of a majority
Christian culture.



### PHILIP POWER

After people realized there were there than Christians in our nation who might want their par-ticular holidays and culture recog nized, schools tried to celebrate a variety of holidays — Christmas, Kwanzas, Hanukkah. But such attempts at inclusion have fallen

attempts at inclusion have failen afoul of the culture police.

This year, the Anti-Defamation League sent a letter to Detroit-area school superintendents reminding them that "religious neutrality is essential in our public schools" and lecturing them that by choosing to celebrate "certain religious holicelebrate "certain religious holi-days, schools run the risk of send-ing the message that they favor certain faiths over others.

tain faiths over others.

Last year, schools in Farmington
adopted a district policy on religion.
Public holidays such as Christmas can be recognized with parties and parades, but not observed. The pol-icy says that observance would commemorate or instill commitment to the values and beliefs rep-resented by the holiday."

Score yet another big one for the

progressive value-free secularizaof our culture.

If schools are not going to help finstill commitment to the values and beliefs represented" by reli-gious holidays, how is it going to be done?

"By the family," answer progressives, probably rightly in theory.

But anybody who has tried to raise kids these days knows full well there are lots more influences on the development of culture in a young person than solely the warm family hearth.

As long as we purge — whether by active commission or fearful omission — religious understandomission — trigidal we cut our-selves off from one of a diminishing number of sources by which a culture of values can be communicated

throughout our society.

I'm not about to go whole hog with the religious right and clai with the religious right and claim that we must bring prayers back to the schools. But I must admit those folks have a real point when they talk about the progressive sec-ularization of our culture, the climination of values and ethics from our schools, the substitution of the common for the sublime.

common for the sublime.

As a socioty, we seem to be in the midst of letting the entertainment industry define our national culture because we can't find a good way to communicate values beyond the commercial and the secular without supposed the offending samphody.

commercial and the securar without supposedly offending somebody with quick access to a lawyer.

At a time when our political system has been brought to chaos by considering whether to remove a president who has debased his office through prosecution by the House of Representatives that has debased the Constitution, that's a sorry state of affairs.

Phil Power is chairman of Home-Town Communications 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@oeonline.com

## It's no port in the storm

y almost 4-year-old grand-daughter learned a new word last week: "canceled."

Her Jan. 4 Northwest flight from Boston to Detroit was "canceled," sh get home and I miss my cats." "Guess what," I told her with false brightness from Juno Beach, Fla. "Papa's and my

flight was canceled, too."

That, of course, was our Jan. 2 That, of course, was our Jan. 2 Northwest flight from West Palm Beach, as well as our rebooked Jan. 4 flight that also did not fly. She and her parento finally get home in the wee hours of Jan. 6, after their rebooked flight was delayed

ore than three hours and their bag-

gage for two.

We finally got home by standing by for a Jan. 6 Northwest flight, which was reputedly overbooked. As it turned out, even after the standbys had been boarded, 10 scats flew

empty to Detroit.

Like many, ours was a story of inconvenience caused by the largest winter storm to hit metro Detroit in 20 years. Meryl Rackley of Birmingthan tells of taking her deughter to the airport on the afternoon of Jan. 3, after her morning flight back to col-lege in Minnesota had been ... you

lege in Minnesota and been ... you guessed it, canceled.
They kept an ear to the radio, and continually called Northwest. 'It took a lot of maneuvering to get there — and four hours out of our day. If they could only have announced not to bother coming to the airport," she

says.

Because as they approached through the glassed-in passageway between the parking deck and the Northwest Terminal, "It looked like Dante's Inferno," Rackley describes.

"Reache was writhing a gound."

"People were writhing around."
Once they entered the terminal,
"The check-in was a five-hour wait, people were angry, tempers were short, most of the people in line had been stranded," Rackley recounts. "It looked like a homeless shelter with families lined up against the wall."



#### JUDITH DONER BERNE

Rackley saw, and then heard, the difference between inconvenience and real hardship. They ran into one of Alison's former classmates, who had been there for 27 hours trying to get to Philadelphia. In retrospect, Rackley couldn't be sure whether that includ-

ed his eight hours on a runway.

Perhaps he'll decide to join the class-action lawaiit filed a week ago against Wayne County and Northwest Airlines. I can't say I blame those who were confined to a plane immobilized on the runway without food, water and adequate bathroom facilities for up to eight hours.

It shouldn't have happened, but when it did, good sense and good man-ners demanded more than a mere

apology from Northwest.

Northwest and the Wayne County officials who run Metro first blamed one another for the catastrophe. But as rumors of the lawsuit took hold,

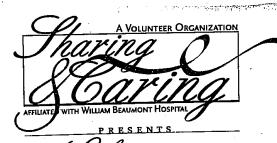
as rumors of the lawsuit took hold, they put up a united front without further recriminations. We'll have to wait to see whether their public unity is a whiteout pri-marily designed to subvert legal action or a real effort to plow through the drifts of poor cooperation and alconing.

planning.
Meantime, here's another cancella-tion: the notion of Detroit Metro as

tion: the nation of Detroit New Vas any (air)port in a storm. Judith Doner Berne, a West Bloom-field resident, is former managing edi-tor of the Eccentric Newspapers. You can comment on this column by calling (734) 953-2047, Ext. 1997 or in a letter, or fax (248) 477-9722.

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