

Viewpoint: Fine words won't cover greed behind WMU's plans for Colony Orchard Farm

By [Viewpoint](#)

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Western Michigan University President John Dunn's Sept. 23 Viewpoint, which pushes for another intrusion of urban sprawl blight onto still more ever receding green space called the Colony Orchard Farm, prompts me to share words written to me in an April, 2008, letter from former WMU president, Diether Haenicke:

"Dear Roger, I have come over the years closer to your ideas that a return to a much simpler way of life with much more respect for our environment is needed. I also see the enormous exploitation of our precious resources, our boundless greed for ever more, and the widespread senseless and appalling greed in our economic institutions and in our academic ones now, too.

"But I also have become rather pessimistic about the likelihood of change in these matters. Most educators do not set an inspiring example for their students. Many of us are infected by the cancer of economic greed and social and environmental irresponsibility that I see everywhere. I am more or less resigned that things will take their course; that some sort of catastrophic shortages will eventually happen and will force us to re-think the fundamentals of our economic and environmental behavior. Nothing short of a real disaster will change our society, I fear.

"Sorry to sound so glum, but best wishes and many blessing anyway, and thanks for writing. — Diether"

John Dunn's words model perfectly the "inconvenient truths" Diether expressed regarding the enormous exploitation of precious resources, our boundless greed for ever more, and the widespread senseless and appalling greed in our economic and academic institutions. Dunn, like other educators, legislators and media folks, neglects to confront the cancerous infection of economic greed and social and environmental irresponsibility of which Diether sadly spoke and of which we all share in the blame.

I know John Dunn personally and I like him a lot. However, what he shares in his Viewpoint brings to mind a book on "truthfulness and falsehood" by the renowned moral philosopher and professor emeritus at Princeton University, Harry G. Frankfurt, titled "On Bull---t."

I would like to add a P.S. to the B.S. spread by Frankfurt in his book and by Dunn in his Viewpoint. In neither case are the words used in proportion to the honest essence of truth which the cattle spread on Lake Village pastures to help to replenish the Earth, as opposed to destroying it under more concrete and buildings. This same essence, when spread in gardens, fosters the growth of health-giving organic food.

Rather, both men, as I too often do, speak with academic tongues wherein the once alleged goal of education of searching for the truth and telling it like it is has been increasingly replaced by the search for money and hiding our prostititional actions within and behind word soups that are stamped by shady, government-corporate-university approval and passed on via the media, all of which lead us further into the status quo disaster of which Diether Haenicke warned.

That's the problem.

The solution is to allow the Colony Orchard Farm to remain an unsullied garden of green space and a symbol that, just maybe, there is a Kalamazoo that can keep a promise.

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