

The Sun

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR
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Partnership between Pratt, local schools is needed for libraries

Congratulations on your editorial decrying the condition of the libraries in our public schools ("Empty library shelves are an embarrassment," June 15). There are millions for stadiums and hotels while libraries must go begging for less than half a million to provide educational facilities.

The Sun's effort to keep Reading by Nine in the public eye is commendable. What about "After Nine," the age when the availability of the accumulated wisdom of those first years becomes increasingly important?

Visit the Roland Park branch of the Enoch Pratt Free Library when school is in session. You will see dozens of children working in the library. Because the library of the Roland Park public school is virtually empty of books and personnel, the children come to the nearby branch of the Pratt.

To the shock and horror of everyone in our area, the Pratt's administration has discussed the possibility of closing the Roland Park branch (and others) in favor of four "satellite" facilities. Where will the local school children go then?

I propose that the Pratt form partnerships with local schools to improve those libraries. For the school system and for the library system to say "we can't do that" is unacceptable. We desperately need a literate and educated population. Let the mayor make good on calling Baltimore "The City That Reads."

Eileen Higham
Baltimore

Teachers like Gary Levin inspire their students

I applaud The Sun for its commitment to improving education with comprehensive coverage of trends and successes and with human interest stories about local schools. But it was from a personal stance that I read "School's out for teacher after 32 years" (June 21). You see, Gary Levin was my seventh-grade creative-writing teacher.

The sentiments he expressed as he reflected on his teaching career held special meaning for my coming of age. In the chaotic unreality of an adolescent's journey through seventh-grade, Mr. Levin's writing class was an oasis of sanity, mutual respect and academic stimulation.

His energy, competence and dedication had a rousing effect on our group of emerging teens. We came alive, learned to write and (some of us) learned to love it. I was one of the lucky students inspired by Mr. Levin.

Today, I share his concerns about our schools. I relate to his skepticism about teaching trends based on "what research reveals." His humorous recollections tell of a career woven as a tapestry of relationships, not one of merely dispensing information. He remained true to his beliefs about what makes a good teacher and influenced my career choice.

We can change the world, one student at a time, as long as there are teachers who inspire. I write this as a teacher who was once a student of one of the best.

Terry Greenberg
Manchester

Strong training for teachers in Baltimore Co. program

NewsBank, inc.

During the week of June 15-19, I had the opportunity to assist in the training provided to 125 exceptionally motivated and highly qualified teachers who are mentors to new teachers in the Baltimore County public schools' new teacher mentor program.

I believe this program is among the finest teacher mentoring programs in the United States. It is strong because of dynamic leadership and a cadre of mentors who are teacher leaders in their own right.

It is also remarkable because the clearly articulated goal of the program is to improve student achievement. Many other mentoring programs fall short of this goal by providing support and encouragement to beginning teachers without regard to student learning.

The citizens of Baltimore County should take pride in this high-quality program that assists new teachers to excel in their work, thereby assuring the best possible education for students.

Tom Gasner
Whitewater, Wis.

The writer is director of field experiences at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater.

Facts missing in criticism of judge's treatment in court

I continue to be troubled by your editorial "Is a judge a citizen, too?" (June 10).

You criticized District Judge Vincent A. Mulieri for treating another judge, who appeared before him as a criminal defendant, more harshly than he would have treated a defendant who was not a judge just to avoid the appearance of favoritism.

You conclude that Judge Mulieri rejected the recommendation of the state's attorney to inactivate the criminal charges against the defendant-judge because Judge Mulieri was afraid he would appear to be favoring a fellow judge.

You jump to a lot of conclusions without a lot of information.

The state presented two cases of the same type that day. One defendant was a judge; one was not. Perhaps Judge Mulieri was concerned that the other defendant in court that day on similar but less serious charges might wonder why he was not offered the same leniency as the judge-defendant was offered.

Judges can only grant that leniency when the state suggests it, and the state did not suggest it in the other, less serious case that day.

Neither, apparently, has the state suggested the lighter treatment in even half of its cases of the same type.

To conclude that Judge Mulieri "erred" by not giving the defendant-judge equal treatment was uninformed. Judge Mulieri did not treat the defendant-judge more harshly that day. He treated him the same as the other defendant.

What might we learn from this? I would like to think that before we criticize judges for their decisions, we know everything there is to know about the circumstances under which they work.

Martha F. Rasin
Annapolis

The writer is chief judge of Maryland's District Court system.

Cybersex poll fails to gauge activity on Internet sites

The article "Web sex mostly tame" in the Plugged In section (June 22) states erroneous conclusions. The study by Stanford researcher Alvin Cooper makes two crucial mistakes, which make it impossible to project the sample results to Internet users visiting sex sites.

For sample results to give the characteristics of all Internet users of cybersex sites, it is necessary to have a random sample in which every such user has an equal chance of being included. The sample used in the study is not a random sample, as it is limited only to the Marital Service and Sexuality Center users.

There is no reason to believe that users of this site are representative of all cybersex users of the Internet. Furthermore, the sample results are further tainted as the survey respondents were self-selected.

These flaws in the sample methodology make it impossible to draw any conclusion favorable or unfavorable from the study about

cybersex Internet users.

Probably the most infamous use of biased sample results to project the population occurred during the 1948 presidential election when telephone sampling was used to project the presidential winner. At that time, telephones were in a vastly larger percentage of Republican homes than in Democratic homes. Thus the survey was biased against Democrats.

Mr. Cooper says he believes the survey provides "a valuable snapshot" of people who go online for sexual pursuits because of the size of the survey, 9,100 usable responses. A large number of observations may provide a more accurate measure of whatever is being studied.

Frederick W. Derrick:
Baltimore

City has to work harder on rubbing out urban rats

As a Canton resident, I read with a mixture of sadness and hope George Kropkowski's June 23 letter on rats in Canton ("Rats! Creatures interrupt pleasant Canton memories," June 23).

How sad that all of the hard work and effort put into redeveloping Canton as a desirable business and residential area could be destroyed by the rat population, a population that the mayor and city of Baltimore seem uninterested in eradicating while cities such as Chicago have comprehensive rat-abatement plans.

Perhaps now that a suburban resident has captured the public's attention by refusing to come to the city because of the rats, the mayor will see that it's time to take control of the problem.

I bought a home in Canton seven years ago and until this summer enjoyed living there. Now, the rats hold me captive in my own home after sunset.

If the city doesn't declare war on rats soon, I will join Mr. Kropkowski and many other former city residents in the suburbs.

It's time for the mayor and the city to do something meaningful. The city's Rat Rubout program just isn't doing it.

Denise C. Barrett
Baltimore

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