

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Smoke House Editor: The non-smokers are happy now that Loch Raven Veterans Hospital has been designated a smoke-free workplace.

To make the smokers happy a temperature-controlled outbuilding has been constructed to accommodate them while they smoke.

Looks like the only unhappy people are the taxpayers who are paying \$15,000 for this facility to be built.

Ilene Kayne. Baltimore. Outraged Editor: I write in response to your July 22 editorial, "Time Out for 'Adult Entertainment' ." I am rather surprised that The Sun, normally a staunch defender of the First Amendment, took the position that it did.

You wrote that the Anne Arundel County bill called for a study concerning "adult book stores and film-viewing machines." The bill, fortunately, only deals with film-viewing machines.

You wrote that "incidentally" a lawyer representing the applicants for film-viewing machine licenses would not identify his clients' backers "or even say where they were from." Lawyers are required to retain client confidences. More disturbing, however, was the inference, if not the implication, about Mogura and Tokai Enterprises. Your implication is that the backers of these applicants are foreigners. This is outrageous. Even if the applicants are foreign, they are entitled to the privilege of the First Amendment.

The bill places a prior restraint on a form of communication in Anne Arundel County. Presently, according to Anne Hatcher of the county's Department of Licensing, no licenses for film-viewing machines have been issued in the county. Therefore, the proposed ban, however temporary, completely prohibits a form of speech in the county.

I agree that Anne Arundel County has the right, indeed the obligation, to create zoning rules to govern these enterprises just as its zoning rules govern, to use your example, movie houses. I presume, however, that movie theaters existed in the county while the zoning policy governing them was being formulated. Now, the county would impose a complete and prior restraint on speech while it creates a zoning policy. This cannot and should not be allowed.

Joel Simon. Reisterstown. The writer works pro bono for the American Civil Liberties Union. LeViness Blew It Editor: In response to G. Denmead LeViness' Aug. 14 letter, "NAACP Blew It," I find it quite predictable that a white attorney would support a lost lamb like Clarence Thomas.

While it may be accurate that Judge Thomas did grow up in a poverty stricken area, his philosophical understanding of the needs of the African-American community is flawed. It is typical that a non-African-American presumes that African-Americans want "give-aways" -- Mr. LeViness cites "affirmative action, welfare, busing and things like that" as give-away programs that African-Americans support. Mr. LeViness clearly epitomizes the misunderstanding of some whites in dealing with the needs of the African-American community in analyzing Judge Thomas' background and supporting his nomination to the Supreme Court.

Mr. LeViness fails to understand that affirmative action programs benefit America, not simply one class or group of Americans. It should be noted that African-Americans have just started to benefit from affirmative action programs. For only recently have African-Americans in businesses begun to appear in large numbers in key corporate positions as a result of affirmative action.

Lastly, Mr. LeViness contends that we should support Judge Thomas simply because he is "black." Let's be clear, African Americans have never needed a president, or any other individual, to tell us who we should support. It is one thing to suggest reasons to support a nominee; it is quite another to state that the failure to support a chosen leader is due to a passion for welfare. I urge Mr. LeViness to stay out of politics in the African-American community, for he knows not from whence we have come. \$ Richard G. Wiley Jr. Baltimore. Tank Battle Editor: Your article Aug. 14 relative to the unfortunate rate of losses from friendly fire in Kuwait had a glaring error. Pentagon officials called this the largest armored battle in history.

While it is true there were large numbers of armored vehicles in the theater, I do not see where they even approach the Battle of Kursk in July 1943. The Germans had 2,700 tanks in the area and the Russians had over 3,300. In one day's battle, over 700 German tanks were destroyed. This battle ultimately led to the Nazis' final defeat.

I think we should try to keep this campaign in proper perspective. % Sanford H. Disney Jr. Lutherville. Don't Force It Editor: I am surprised to find myself agreeing with Roger Simon's recent column on the proposed community-service requirement for Maryland's high school students. We are apparently going to require of children what we would never tolerate being required of us as adults.

Has it occurred to Kathleen Townsend and others that another way to involve students in community service is to let them see adults modeling this behavior? Do students see their parents, teachers, friends and families doing community service?

If Mrs. Townsend thinks students aren't doing community service and therefore teachers are to blame, she is uninformed. During the last school year, our students, like many others, participated in Support Our Service People (SOS), collected canned goods for those in need, visited area nursing homes, participated in walkathons, jumpathons, bowlathons and runs too numerous to mention, collected pennies for the Afro-American Archives project, collected Coats for Kids, Boxes for Blankets and recycled aluminum.

Did we do enough? Probably not. Could we do more? Yes, and we will, but please don't tell me students don't do community service. I know better -- and so should Mrs. Townsend and the State Board of Education. ! Faith C. Hermann. Catonsville. The writer is principal of Catonsville Middle School. Say 'Yes' to Straight Inc. Editor: After reading your editorial comments about Straight Inc., I felt angry, frustrated and hopeless. Many of the issues you raised were stated correctly but some were untrue and others were exaggerated.

Straight Inc. was founded in 1976 by a group of parents who felt desperate about their children's behavior. There were no effective long-term treatment centers available to them. The parents incorporated, with the help of professionals, into their treatment the 12 steps of Alcoholics Anonymous and the use of structured, positive peer pressure and parent and sibling counseling. As Straight Inc. grew, it was necessary to transfer the management of the treatment centers to an administrative staff.

At Straight Inc., the entire family receives treatment. Ninety-two percent of siblings never become involved with drugs. Both my wife and I, our other children and my son Greg are in treatment. I am constantly frustrated by the administrative shortcomings of the program. Honestly, these are internal problems and the administration at Straight Inc. is working hard to improve these defects.

In contrast to the administrative staff, the clinical staff and therapeutic program are excellent and very powerful. Our home is open as a host home, which means we board some of the kids in the program. We experience their struggles, share their innermost feelings and fears and watch their recovery unfold from "society's most vexing problems" -- drug addiction.

The bottom line is that the program works.

Sure there are problems with staff, and these problems can easily give Straight Inc. a black eye. But look deeper into the program, look at the kids under treatment, talk to them. Straight Inc. is helping to save my son's life, when many, many health-care opportunities in the past could not.

On the front page of The Sun, an excellent article by Ellen Uzelac and Joel McCord was written about young teens and alcohol. In it Michael Schiks, director of Hazelden Pioneer Center for addicts, says: "The most frightening thing is that treatment centers are closing. The young kids are falling through the cracks, and the older kids either aren't getting help or they're going to jail."

In the editorial, you said "just say no" to Maryland regulators who are evaluating Straight Inc. for state certification. I promise you: if your son or daughter was an addict, you would be begging the state to just say yes.

Jerry Yeoumans. Hunt Valley.

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